

BLUE BOOK

An Illustrated Magazine... June—15 cents



Leland Jamieson, Fulton Grant, H. Bedford-Jones,
Robert Mill, William Chester, James Francis Dwyer
"Fighting John McCloy," by Lowell Thomas

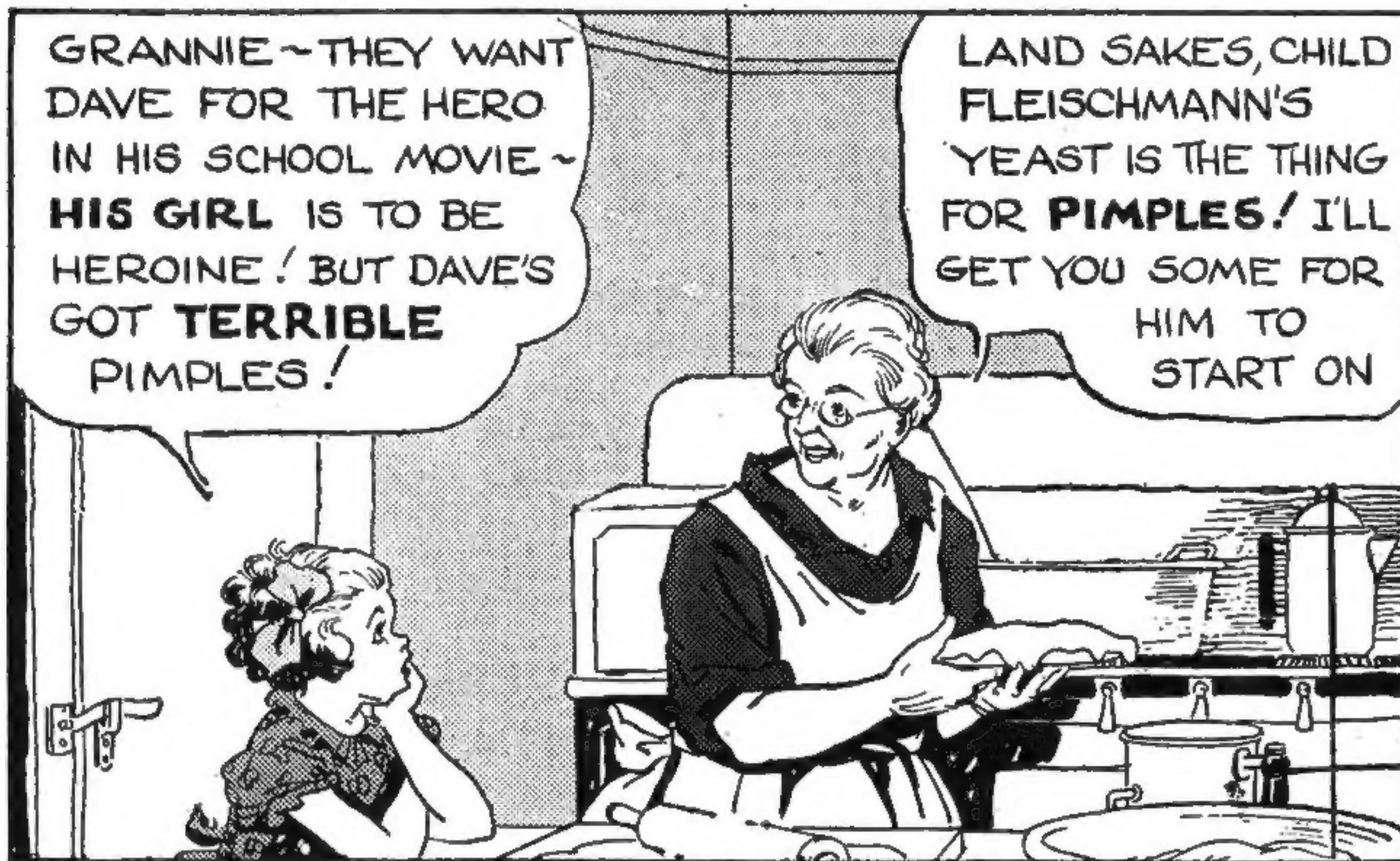
JUNE 1936

THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

VOL. 63 No. 2



**But
little
sister
helps
Dave
to star
in school
movie**



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**by clearing skin irritants
out of the blood**

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BLUE BOOK



JUNE, 1936

MAGAZINE

VOL. 63, NO. 2

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Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

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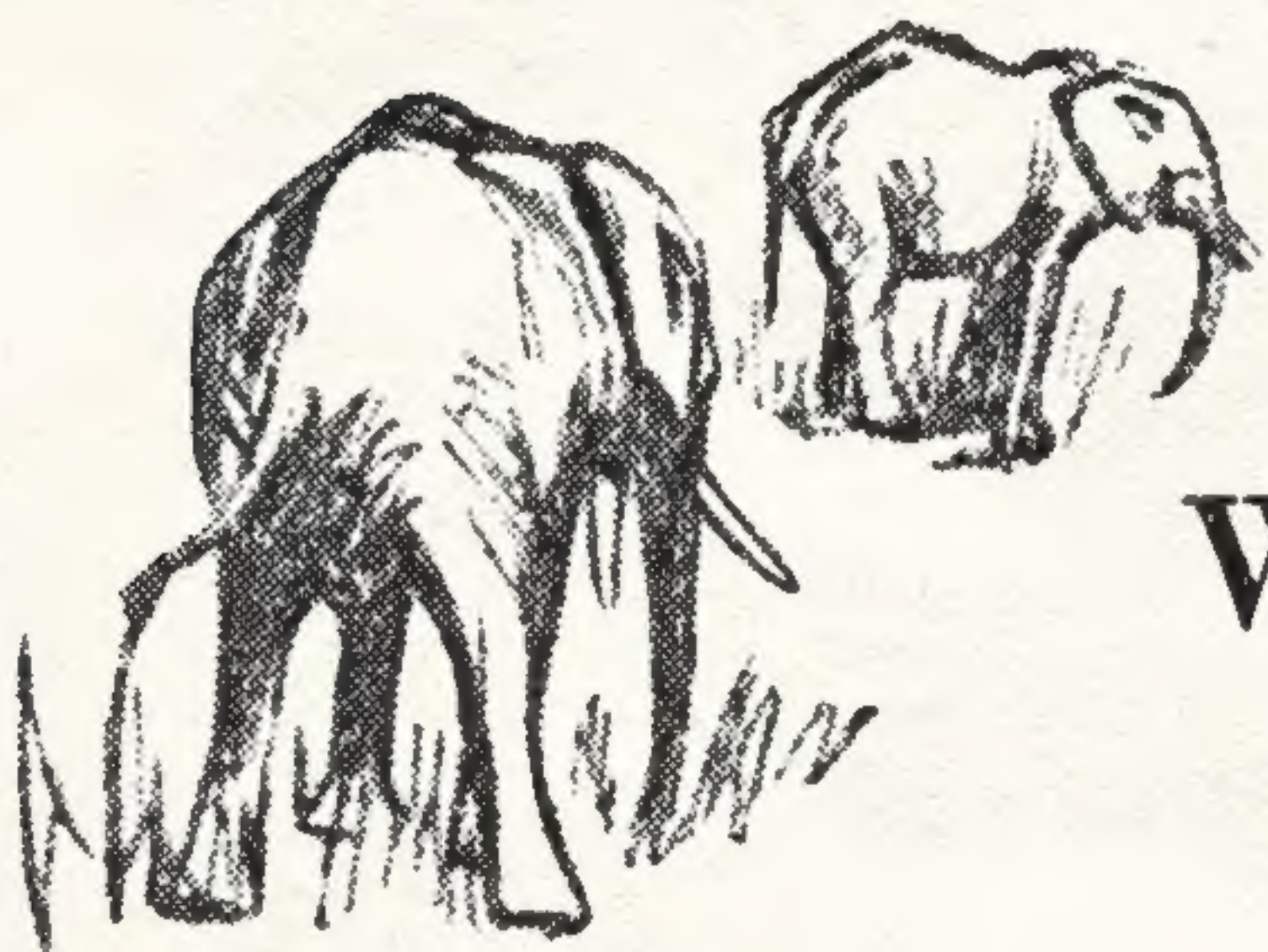
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From a Naturalist's

By

WALTER
WILWERDING



MY first really bad experience with an elephant was in a small circus. A friend of mine bought a huge bull at what he thought a bargain. The keeper came along with the elephant. Full of whisky courage, he handled the big bull through sheer bluff. But he was a difficult man to have around and my friend (still in the kindergarten of his elephant experience) discharged him.

I was making sketches of the big bull—afraid of him too, for he had a bad eye and was weaving evilly—when the new keeper came up to take charge. He walked into the pen, prodded the elephant in the side with the elephant hook and ordered him to move over. Quicker than you could whistle, the elephant picked him up in his trunk and, as if he were a sack of peanuts, threw him over an eight-foot partition. The poor devil had a broken arm and three broken ribs when we picked him up and sent him to the hospital.

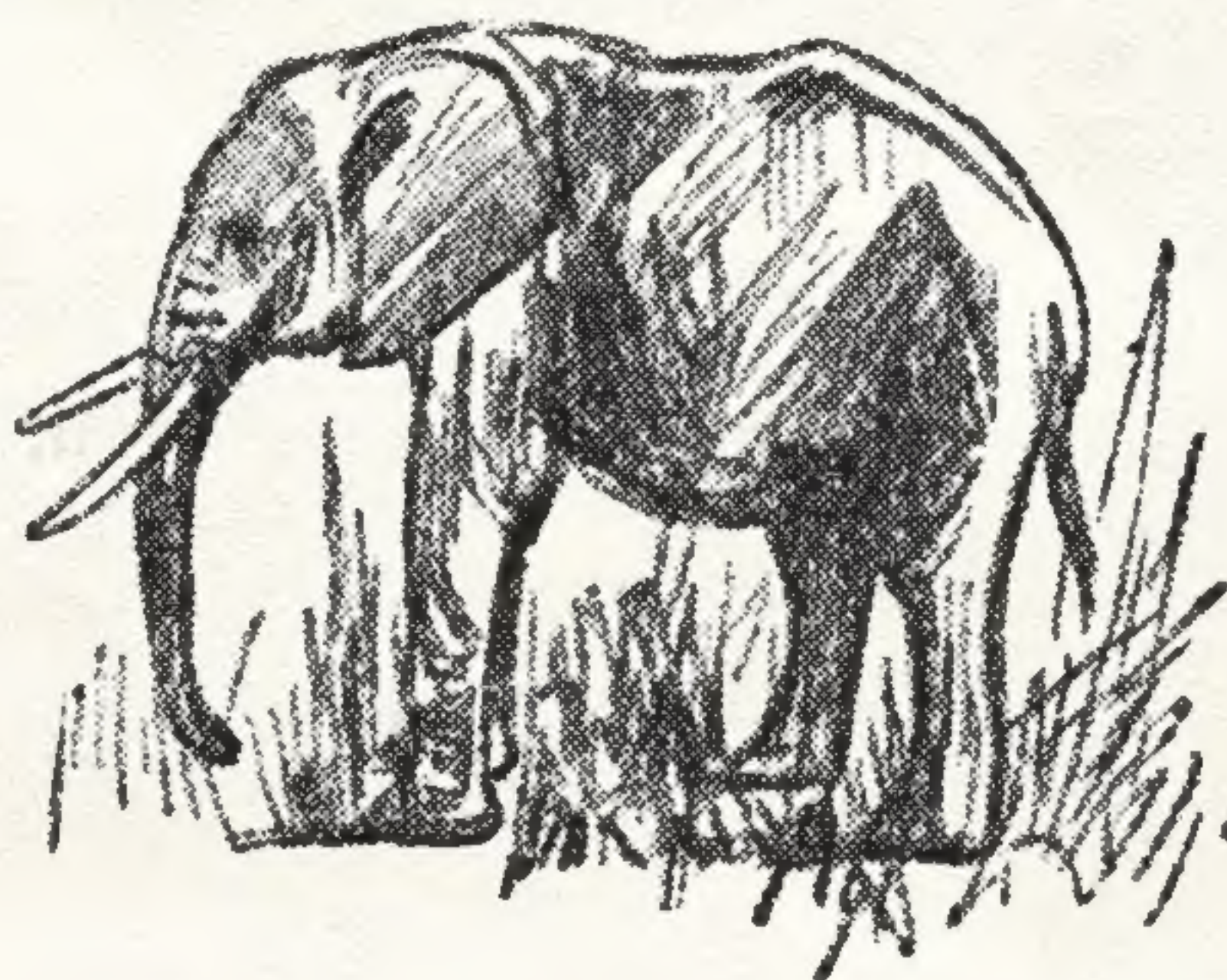
The elephant now started to take his pen apart, and my friend who owned the beast—a little man with more courage per inch of height than any other man I ever knew—walked into the pen, got directly in front of the elephant and tried to quiet him. I don't know how elephants' minds work and cannot tell you why this one did not throw my friend also out of the pen. Instead, he lowered the big bulk of his head and tried to crush my friend against the wall. He saw his peril and darted into a corner; the elephant's head being so broad that, though he heaved and heaved until one wall started to give way, my friend was untouched. He stooped, darted in between the elephant's legs and got away without harm. Right then and there he decided that rogue elephants were not for him—and a rifle was brought. . . .

But I went into the African jungles to get my real thrill out of elephants. The

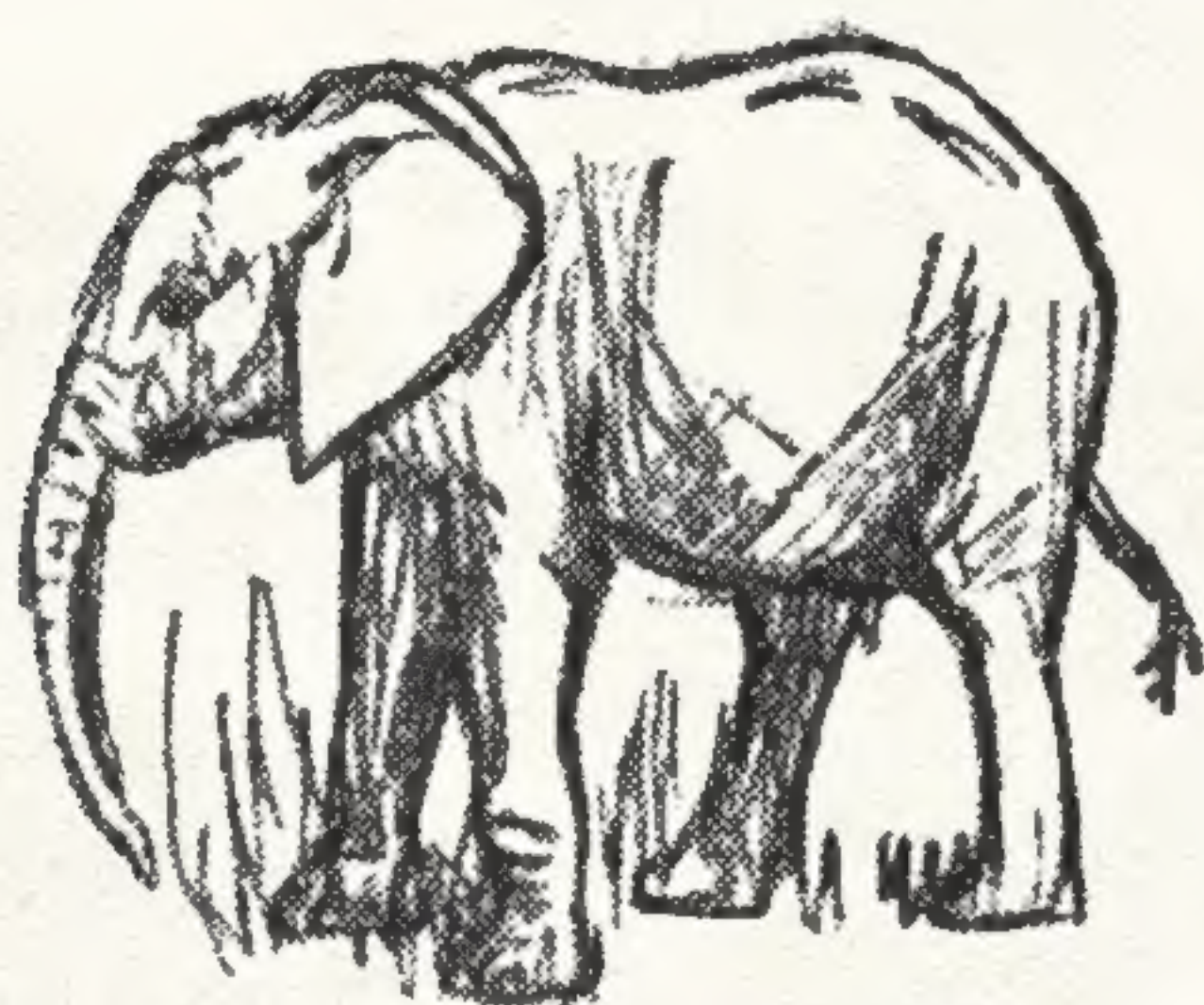
African is an entirely different beast from the Indian elephant seen in circuses. It is higher at the withers, more gaunt-looking, has much larger ears than the Indian variety and a more rounded forehead. The African variety is supposed to be more dangerous, but I doubt this. The African elephant is hunted more than the Indian, which alone accounts for its higher percentage of human killings. As a result he is mighty testy about wind that has the taint of man in it.

I was out with an Africander who had lost his license, because he had shot two elephants with undersized ivory. I had no license, because I couldn't afford one. I was told I might not shoot or photograph elephants without a license, but nothing was said about making sketches, so there we were on the trail of a herd.

It was composed chiefly of cows and young and when we got to where they rested under some trees, I busied myself with making sketches until, unnoticed by us, the wind shifted and at once every huge ear was spread and uplifted trunks wove about in the air. Fortunately my guide knew all about these beasts and hurried me off to one side just in time to avoid their charge. A screaming crowd of cows tore a swath through those woods, and a glorious sight they were, though I was mighty glad I wasn't in their path. Cows with young are often more dangerous than bulls.



Scrapbook



Within the past few months an Englishman, out to take moving pictures, was less lucky. He asked a friend of mine and a companion to take him out where he could obtain elephant pictures. Contrary to advice, he took only a small-calibered rifle and no white hunter, for he said that he wasn't going to harm elephants and there was no reason why they should harm him. He made the mistake of not informing the elephants of his intentions. Neither my friend, Mr. Andrews of Moshi, nor his companion would go close to the elephants, but the Englishman walked up to a cow with twins and started to crank away. The cow suddenly got his wind and charged. My friend's companion shot the elephant through the head, but too late to save the Englishman.

The size of an elephant's tusks has nothing to do with the size of his temper and an elephant with small tusks or none at all can turn you into mincemeat as quickly as an old tusker. Also it is well to remember that hunting with the sketch-pad or camera is often a more hazardous occupation than going shooting, for the man making pictures is not prepared to shoot quickly and in order to get good results he must get close.

In view of the reputedly intractable and fierce disposition of the African elephant, it may surprise many to learn that the Belgian Government has training stations for elephants in the Congo. Young elephants are caught from wild herds and put through a course of training in much the same manner in which kheda operations are carried on in India. They have succeeded in training them to do work, just as the Indian elephant does much of the heavy work in that land. The African elephant is smart and strong and it is not exaggerating to predict that some day it will be doing much of the heavy work in Africa.

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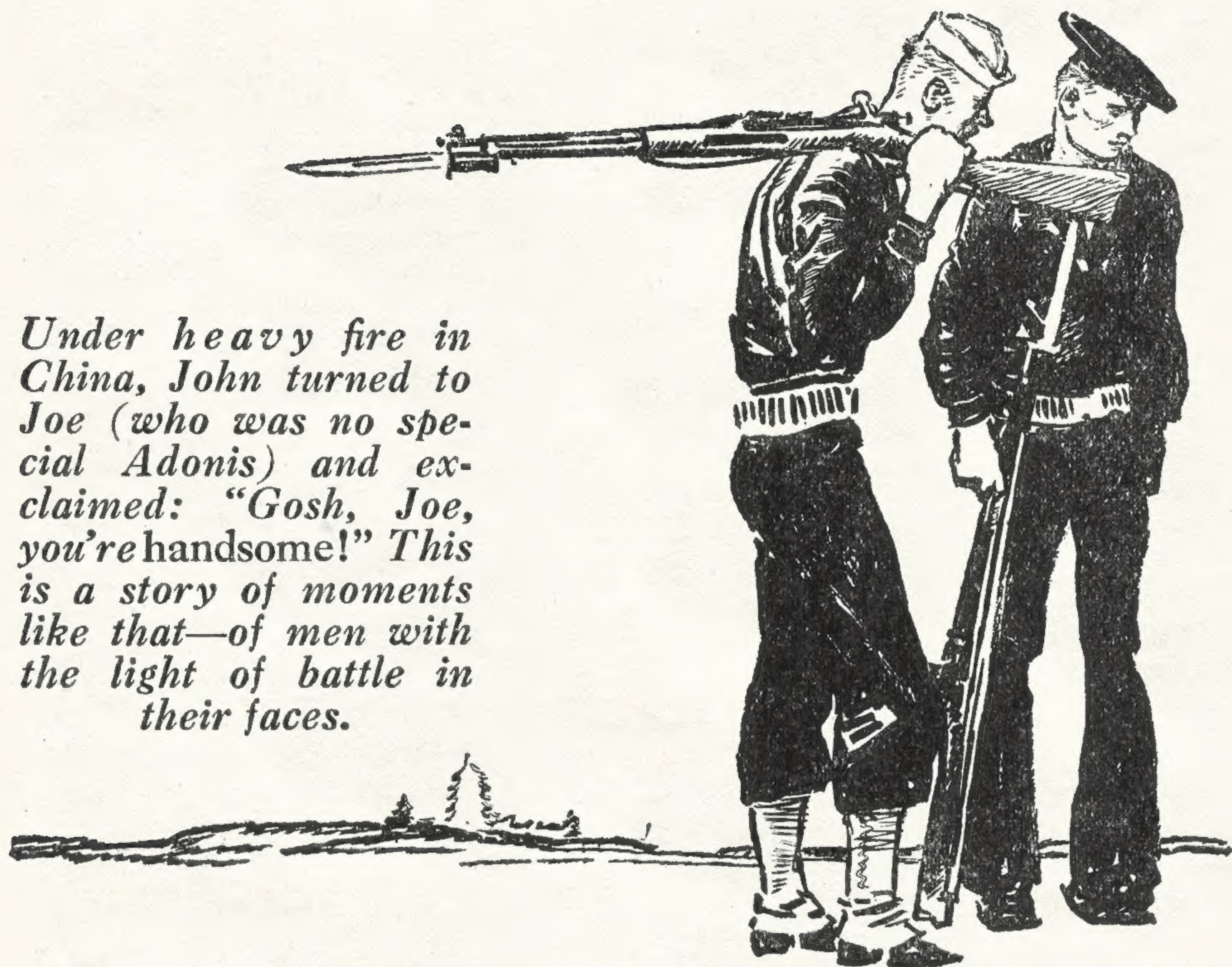
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Under heavy fire in China, John turned to Joe (who was no special Adonis) and exclaimed: "Gosh, Joe, you're handsome!" This is a story of moments like that—of men with the light of battle in their faces.



Fighting John

Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon

OUR decoration that corresponds to the British Victoria Cross is the Congressional Medal of Honor. To get it, requires a special act of Congress. Rare as it is for one of Uncle Sam's fighting men to receive this honor, it is about one hundred times rarer for a man to be awarded it twice. In fact, just three living Americans can make that proud boast. And of these three, one is Lieutenant John McCloy, a fearless Irishman, a physical giant who in the Middle Ages would have made himself a feudal baron or a king because of his immense strength and his ability to lead men in battle. Because of his prowess, a companion once dubbed him "Sir John," and the title seems to stick.

When he was six years old, little John McCloy's mother was drowned, and the family moved to New York City. At twelve, the boy went to work in a pencil

factory, removing hot rubber erasers from iron molds, and then putting cold rubber into the molds. For this, working sixty hours a week, his Saturday night pay-check amounted to two dollars. He was obliged to pick out the hot rubber with his fingers, and they were so badly burned that he had to give up his job at the end of the first week.

His father had fought with the North, as a Navy man in the Civil War, so young John had always known the lure of the sea. While still twelve years old, he went to work on a sea-going barge, and has been at sea most of the time ever since. As a youngster he navigated a skiff all the way down the Mississippi River from St. Paul to New Orleans, then became an oyster fisherman in Delaware Bay, and afterward roamed the world on sailing-ships—on vessels bound for the West Indies, South America, Europe, Alaska and the



By LOWELL THOMAS
and JOHN McCLOY

Far East. On one voyage, while passing through the Straits of Sunda, they sailed through a sea of stone and ash showered from an eruption of Krakatao.

He had been on ships for ten years, and had had experiences all around the world, when at the age of twenty-two he enlisted in the United States Navy.

From then on his adventures were those of a professional fighting man: in the Philippines; with the Allies in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, where he was promoted on the battlefield, and received the first of his two Congressional Medals; in the "Hot Countries" of America and North Africa; and in the World War.

In his own words, this battling Irishman has told me the story of the fights that caused Uncle Sam to honor him by special acts of Congress. From here on the words are those of Fighting John McCloy.

CHAPTER I

TO THE RESCUE IN CHINA

THE Boxers, a powerful secret society of Northern China, started a movement to drive foreigners out of their country. The movement became so powerful it amounted to a rebellion against the Imperial Government of China. Missionaries and business men, with their families, were driven into the European concessions in Tientsin and into the European and American legations in Peking. The legations themselves were menaced, and guarded; and diplomats were unable to get a guarantee of safety from the Chinese Government to leave the country. Hundreds of foreigners were sewed up in these two large cities and surrounded by hostile troops. It was thought at first that a show of naval force at Taku would be sufficient to overawe the rebels and

strengthen the backbone of the Chinese Government so that order could be restored. But seasons of drought in the country and the privations of the people had made them receptive to propaganda that "foreign devils" with their Christian religion were the cause of all their troubles, and that they ought to drive these foreign devils out.

Following are translations of two posters widely distributed at the time by the Boxers:

Members of the Catholic and Protestant religions have poisoned the wells with powders. Whosoever drinks the water will die in eighteen days of rotten intestines and lungs.

Two men were arrested by us at Sin-Si-Chuang and we found they had poison in all their pockets. They were silent when questioned, and bold when tortured. Whoever smells the poison will die immediately.

You must be very cautious when drinking water. Spread the word everywhere so that our people will not be poisoned like rats.

The gods assist the Boxers,
That patriotic, harmonious corps.
They are with us because the foreign
devil has
Disturbed the Middle Kingdom
By urging the people to join other religions;
To turn their backs on heaven,
To venerate not the gods, and to forget
their ancestors,
Men violate their human obligations;
Women commit adultery.
Foreign devils are not human.
If you do not believe, look at them carefully;
The eyes of the foreign devil are bluish.
No rain falls;
The earth is becoming dry.
This is because their churches anger the
true heaven.
Our gods are angry; the genii are vexed.
This is no hearsay.
Recite, incant and pronounce the magic
words;
Burn the yellow written words and prayers;
Light incense sticks;
And the gods and genii will come out of
all the grottoes and mountains.
Dedicate yourself to the practice of boxing.
When all the military arts are fully
learned, it will not be difficult to exterminate the foreign devils.

Push aside the railroad tracks. Pull out the telegraph poles.

Then destroy the steamers.

The great France will grow cold in her heart.

The English and Russians will disperse.

Let the foreign devils all be killed!

May the whole Exalted Empire of the great Ching dynasty be forever prosperous.

IN response to the request for assistance made by the American Legation in Peking, the *Newark* proceeded to Nagasaki, where we took on board the marine guard from the U. S. S. *Oregon*. We then steamed at full speed to Taku, the seaport of Tientsin, and about twenty miles from that city. The port was filled with foreign warships. Marines from the *Oregon* and *Newark* were formed into one company, and with a company of sailors, were landed on May 29. A second company of sailors was sent ashore on June 5. In addition to rifles, these units were equipped with machine-guns and one three-inch field-piece. The marines, with five sailors in charge of the machine-gun, and the medical unit, left Tientsin for Peking. With them went all spare ammunition and all of the hospital supplies. First-aid kits were then unknown in the navy.

Captain McCalla, who was ashore in command of the landing force, sent a tug to the *Newark* for ten thousand rounds of rifle ammunition. The wind was blowing a moderate gale, and the tug could not come alongside because of the high sea running. I was on the quarter-deck and overheard the orders to get the ammunition ashore immediately. On account of low water and high surf on the bar, the master of the tug megaphoned he would be unable to return with it until the weather moderated and the tide changed.

I was under the impression that the ammunition was of vital importance to the men on shore, so I told the acting commanding officer I would take the ammunition in a ship's boat. He looked at me, then at the sea, and said that I was crazy, that no ship's boat could live through that sea and surf with ten thousand rounds of ammunition in it. He said also that we had no men strong enough to pull a ship's boat to shore in that weather. I told him that I could take the boat in under sail.

He inquired about my experience, and after some further talk, he gave the order to get the boat's crew together. A naval cadet was put in charge of the ammuni-

tion detail, and suggested that the sail be reefed. I told him if I was to sail the boat, we would carry full sail; if he wanted the sail reefed, he could do the sailing. He did not interfere further, and obeyed orders as a member of the crew.

The ten thousand rounds of rifle ammunition, ten men and myself as crew, and the naval cadet and six men in charge of the ammunition, left the ship in a thirty-foot cutter, carrying all the sail that the naval regulations allowed for that class of boat in fine weather. We started to ship water immediately. I had seen to it that every man was provided with a tin cup for bailing. Before entering the surf, I put the wind on the starboard quarter, ranged men in oilskins to sit to windward on the rail and act as a breakwater while running through the surf. We sailed the eleven miles from ship to shore in less than one hour.

We stopped at a British torpedo boat that was anchored inside the bar to relay signals to the ships outside the bar. The British officers and sailors gave us an enthusiastic welcome and expressed their admiration of our seamanship. The British, Russian and French admirals signaled the *Newark* congratulating the Old Man on our work.

I did not care to return to the *Newark* in the weather then prevailing, or otherwise, and induced the naval cadet to allow me to take charge of the men of the ammunition detail and go to Tientsin. We arrived there late in the afternoon and learned there was no immediate danger, that the ammunition would not be needed until the following day. When we reported at the mess for supper, we were told we would be sent back to the ship on the morrow. But during the night Captain McCalla received copies of the foreign admirals' signals, and the next morning he asked me if I wanted to go back to the ship or stay ashore. I spoke for all seven of us and said we wanted to remain. The Captain told us to report to the First Company commander for duty.

THE sailors of the landing force had left the ship in heavy marching order—that is, they were equipped for an extended stay on shore, with several uniforms, leggings, and white hats. Members of our ammunition party were armed with rifles and 180 rounds of ammunition, but we did not have any leggings or white hats, and from the rough trip over the bar, our uniforms were spotted with mud and salt. We had slept in these, and

had not shaved that morning. Altogether, we did look rather disreputable for man-of-war sailors. When we reported, I was not surprised by the condemning look in the officer's eye. After making inquiries about our uniforms, he told us we were of no use to him, and instructed us to report to the Second Company. That officer also did not like the looks of us, and decided we ought to be returned to the ship; he would not spoil the appearance of his company by including our tacky-looking group. However, we felt certain Captain McCalla would not change our orders.

We were sent into the inner compound at headquarters and told to keep off the streets. Borrowing soap and razors, we finally made ourselves presentable in the uniforms we had. There came to some one the happy thought that the outposts should be patrolled at night; and as we had been lying around all day doing nothing, they considered it a good job for us. There were two roads about one hundred yards apart with outposts on them, and a small graveyard between them. I was detailed to visit both outposts, and when I suggested we patrol across the graveyard in order to keep in closer touch with the outposts and save time, some of the men were not very keen about it, but did not complain. A French family of three was slain near the city during the week. There was also a heavy rainfall, and we were told it was the first in six months.

CHAPTER II

FIGHTING ON TO PEKIN

ON the morning of June 10 we started for Peking. The German minister had been killed; the city was surrounded by Boxers; and the Chinese Government was unable to assist foreigners who wanted to get out. Our force was composed of one hundred American sailors, four hundred Germans, nine hundred British sailors and marines, four hundred Russian sailors, one hundred and twenty-six French sailors, fifty Japanese sailors, fifty Austrian sailors, and fifty Italian sailors. It was a regular league of nations. Vice Admiral E. H. Seymour, British R. N., the senior officer present, was in command of this very mixed column of about two thousand men of eight nationalities.

We left Tientsin about nine, aboard two trains, expecting to reach Peking that evening at the latest. We took along two hundred Chinese laborers to make re-



pairs on the railroad if necessary, and they were put to work on damaged tracks before we were out of sight of Tientsin. (Nearly all of them deserted next day as soon as the fighting started.) We moved slowly all day, reaching Lo-Fa about dark, having advanced only about thirty miles. We got off the train and pitched camp for the night.

After we had settled down, Chief Boat-swain's Mate Joseph Clancy told me he had orders to get eight volunteers to go back ten miles to Yang-tsun and send dispatches from that place. I volunteered for myself and my six men. With Joe Clancy and Ensign D. W. Wurtsbaugh, we climbed on a hand-car and pumped our way to Yang-tsun. The trip was without incident, although we passed several hostile groups in villages *en route*.

At Yang-tsun, Ensign Wurtsbaugh and four men went into the telegraph station, the rest of us guarding the hand-car. Chinese soldiers began to congregate, and

their actions were decidedly unfriendly. Clancy gave orders not to notice or resent any action on the part of these soldiers, to fight only in self-defense. I had moved away from the hand-car about twenty feet when I heard a rush of feet. Facing about, I saw a Chinese soldier with bayonet on his rifle coming forward to lunge at me. However, a Chinese officer jumped in between us, striking the soldier across the face with a cane.

I wished to show the Chinese officer I was not disturbed by the incident, and thanked him for saving his soldier's life.

He replied in perfect English: "I saved your life because it is too soon to kill you; we will take care of that later on." The officer then shouted some orders, and the Chinese went away.

The dispatches were sent and we returned to the train, arriving in time to hear the outposts firing. The alarm turned out the whole camp, but we did not join the others, remaining by the train. There



We went to work. . . .
One man could not
pull his bayonet out,
so he let go and
picked up a sword.

was plenty of evidence that a battle had taken place between the Chinese Imperial Army and the Boxers at Lo-Fa several days before. The ground was strewn with corpses, some of them dismembered. This gave us an idea of what would happen to any of us who had the misfortune to fall into the Boxers' hands.

Next morning Boxers appeared on our front and flanks, and the call to arms was sounded. When my party fell in with the rest, the senior company officer shouted, "Get the hell out of here," because we were not in the uniform of the day. We stood watching them as they formed lines of skirmishers and advanced toward an irrigation ditch occupied by the enemy. When their approach became cautious, McCalla was standing near the train watching the maneuver. I thought from the frown on his face that he was not pleased, and I turned to my gang and said: "Let's show that bunch how to take a trench." We double-timed around

the left flank, and when we reached the line, we broke into a run and cheered. The whole force joined us and rushed the ditch. The enemy got out before we reached it, leaving a few casualties and a few prisoners.

I was ordered off to the left where a clump of trees covered a small hill. The enemy also started for the place, but we reached it first and drove them off. After the skirmishes were over and we had returned to the train, I was told by the senior company commander I would be recommended for a court-martial for going into battle out of uniform; also that I had destroyed the plan of battle. Thereafter I was to stay on the baggage-car as guard. It was an easy job, but I resented being made to look the fool because my leggings and white hat had been left on the ship. . . .

Our gang held a council of war and got Joe Clancy to fall in with our plan. He talked to Captain McCalla and suggest-

ed that scouts be organized to patrol off the railroad; that my detail be assigned to that duty, with five others. Ensign Wurtsbaugh took charge of the scouts on the 12th, and while we sighted the enemy several times during the day, we made no contact. Most of the Chinese laborers deserted us and began to loot the villages. The Boxers captured some of them, poured kerosene over them and set them on fire, all in sight of our forces.

ON the 13th most of the men were engaged in repairing the railroad. Our scouts made a short survey from the train and returned. All looked peaceful; no enemy in sight. An outpost of eight Italians was posted about one hundred yards from the train to the south. Italian and British sailors were on the train. The Germans occupied a mud ruin to the north of and close to the tracks.

As our party had nothing to do for the time being, we decided to take a bath at a well in a deserted village to the south of the train. We were in various stages of undress when we heard ungodly howling, the crack of rifles and the boom of medieval guns. We hastily put on our shoes, slung our ammunition belts around our waists, grabbed our rifles in one hand, our clothes in the other, and ran to the train. There we found great confusion—some officers ordering men onto the train, other officers ordering them off.

Captain McCalla, with a rifle, and a marine orderly, were near the engine, and we ran up alongside him. We there saw a colorful but awful sight: What seemed to be the entire Chinese population, dressed in light blue, red and blue turbans, red collars and cuffs, red sashes and red anklets, yelling and running toward us. The number was estimated at about three thousand.

In the lead were five Italian sailors who were being pursued, and we opened fire on the Chinese nearest them. In a short time we were almost surrounded by Boxers, some of them even reaching the train in our rear. We went to work with our bayonets. One man got his bayonet into a Boxer's middle and could not pull it out, so he let go the rifle and picked up a two-handed sword. Joe Clancy slipped back, somehow got hold of a British machine-gun and put it into action. The fighting ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and that vast horde melted before our eyes.

It all seemed a dream, except for the fact that the ground was covered with

enemy dead, in heaps close up and in dots as far as one could see. They had the valor of ignorance, and charged right through our fire. Their leaders had made them believe the foreigners' bullets would not harm them if they were true believers. Their firearms were more dangerous to the men firing them than to those they tried to kill. They showed no skill with the sword. Our losses were three Italian sailors killed. Two Americans were cut by swords, but not badly enough to need medical attention.

Capture or destruction of the train would have wrecked the expedition. For all spare ammunition and supplies, also the rifles of nearly half the force who were repairing the tracks, were on the train at the time of the attack. It was probably the most important fight from the point of safety to the column. If the enemy had succeeded in his attack, he would have disarmed a large part of our forces. There was a heavy attack on a British position several miles in our rear at about the same time, and it was repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy. On account of these attacks the repair workers were called in and armed.

The scouts in charge of Ensign Wurtsbaugh were sent out to locate the enemy. We followed their trail, mostly by the dead they had left behind, to a village which they were occupying; but the fight seemed to have left them, and they retreated before us. We captured fourteen jackasses and one mule, mounted them and returned to our post. The men dubbed us "Clancy's Cavalry." I had captured the mule and rode him back to camp. Clancy told me that as he was the senior in command, he was entitled to the best mount. Next morning the bugler sounded "Boots and Saddles" for the cavalry to go to work. Clancy started to saddle the mule, but somehow he became mixed up with the mule's hind end. When I appeared, he was dusting off his clothes. "John," he said, "I have changed my mind about the mule; you ride him." I declined the honor and said the ass was good enough for me. I suggested the mule be given to Boatswain's Mate Edward Allen, and he surprised us by handling him without the slightest trouble.

THE next day, the fourteenth, Ensign Wurtsbaugh and about twenty men left camp to search for a party of British marines that had advanced the day before and had not returned. "Clancy's Cavalry" accompanied them

about three miles along the tracks, then made a wide circle to the south. Returning, we entered a village that appeared to be deserted, but when we reached the well in the center of the village, Boxers sprang from all sides. After slight losses on their part, they retreated into a joss-house, or native church. Clancy decided we were too far from camp to leave a large body of the enemy behind us without putting some fear into them. So we attacked, driving them out into the open and scattering them. We captured some of their flags on long bamboo poles and took them along for souvenirs.

We had hardly cleared the village when, in the distance and across our front, we saw a large body of men in military formation, also flying Boxer flags. They began to deploy and make a turning movement on us, and it looked serious. We felt sure we were meeting Chinese soldiers, and our only hope of reaching our camp was to cut through them. Clancy gave the order to dismount and lead the animals, form skirmishers and not to shoot until we got close, to make sure we got our man. Before we got within good shooting distance we recognized them as Germans. They had had a fight with some Boxers sometime before, and had captured a number of flags. After parting with the Germans, we entered a village and rounded up some chickens and a cow for supper.

Taking a look into a joss-house on a chance we might find some one, it appeared to be deserted except for eight huge idols. Listening for a moment, we heard a rustling in the back where the idols reared themselves twice the height of a man, and the sound was traced to one of these. Devout Chinese stuff paper prayers in the mouths of the idols, and there are holes in the back of them through which priests remove the paper. Poking into the hole, we discovered a cowering Chinese. He came out, and it was plain to us he could not speak English. We did nothing to him, but all of a sudden he began to tremble with terror. His face contorted with fear, and he fell to the floor stone dead. While I am not capable of describing it, I will never live long enough to forget the expression on that man's face. . . .

On June 14 the two trains were halted at Lang Fang, as the roadbed was in such condition they could not proceed. Working parties from the main body went out ahead a short distance to make repairs, and the Americans were sent on afoot to

reconnoiter. We marked twenty miles that day to Station 50, the British in support four miles behind. While we sighted several small bodies of the enemy from our line of march on the roadbed, we made no contacts. We camped in the open at Station 50, and supper was improved by a pig and some chickens lifted in a near-by village.

CHAPTER III

TURNED BACK AT THE GATES

WE now found ourselves within a few miles of our goal; but the Boxers had become more resourceful in breaking up the roadbed, and what we had seen on our march was in such condition we could not repair it with our equipment. We had left Tientsin on a double-track line. Just outside the city we found one of the tracks destroyed, so we switched our trains to the other one. A few miles farther, the rails of both tracks were torn up. A few miles nearer Peking the culverts and small bridges were damaged, and fixing these slowed us up some more. On the sixteenth our scouts discovered that for miles ahead of the trains, the rails and ties had been carried away and the roadbed scattered, and our advance by rail was definitely halted. We knew the enemy outnumbered us twenty or thirty to one—perhaps more; and we were not strong enough to proceed afoot. It was, therefore, decided to retreat to Tientsin. We had advanced about seventy miles in six days.

Naval Cadet Charles E. Courtney and four of us were sent back to report conditions, and with information a Chinese runner had brought from the American Legation in Peking. We reached a British camp about four miles away about midnight. The Boxers had driven in British outposts, and they were on the alert for an attack. After we were identified and let into the camp, a British officer said to me: "You Americans are standing your arm too much in this country; you will get it broken yet." He meant we were too daring in sending such a small party to travel the route we had taken with the dispatches. The next morning we were escorted back to our camp by one hundred British marines.

On June 16 we retraced the twenty miles to Lang Fang, where the British had maintained a rear guard. The enemy
(Please turn to page 142)



By
LELAND JAMIESON

Illustrated by Grattan Condon

OLD Peter McCann, the aging sheriff of Broward County, snipped off a new leader and methodically fashioned it to his line. Engaged in his favorite sport of Gulf Stream tuna-fishing, his browned, leathery face was pleasantly solemn as he baited his hook and tossed it over the stern of the *Mary B* into the choppy blue sea. He sat down once more in his swivel chair, and with the reel singing, paid out line.

Only after an hour of pleasant, casual silence, did Lieutenant Robert Hurley, Coast Guard, Dinner Key aviation base, broach cautiously the subject which had really brought him to Fort Lauderdale.

"We've been getting a lot of reports on narcotic smugglers, lately," he said, watching McCann.

The old man rolled a cud of tobacco from his right cheek to his left. He snubbed his reel and shifted his weight to a more comfortable position, rod in its socket on the worn chair seat.

"That so?" he said, accurately whicking a stream of tobacco-juice over the stern. "How they getting it in—planes?"

"I don't know," Hurley confessed frankly.

"Where they bringing it in at?"

"We don't even know that. The Fort Lauderdale base has had picket boats

out most of the time, lately, offshore—but they've come across nothing. We've seen no strange planes. It looks like a tough case."

"Much of it getting in?" Sheriff McCann inquired, watching the *Mary B's* wake with narrowed gray eyes.

"Plenty! We've always had more or less of it, during the winter seasons down here. But this is something enormous. Washington's giving us hell."

The old man smiled with a mild, tolerant understanding. "And you're assigned to the case, and you're stumped, is that it?"

"That's it," Hurley confessed, his mobile face grim.

"What you want me to do?"

Hurley felt the hard tug of a tuna, and his rod whipped and the line jerked taut. For five minutes he was too busy playing the fish to make a reply. When it had been brought in, and his line was again knifing the blue water behind the

A Hunch in Time

Mr. Jamieson has been an army instructor in combat flying, an air-mail pilot—and still flies a regular run for an Eastern line. More important here, he well knows how to tell a colorful and dramatic story.



charter boat, he said with a disarming frankness:

"Sheriff McCann, I've got a hunch this stuff is coming in up around here, somewhere. We've had the Keys too well patrolled. I was wondering if you'd have the beach patrolled, beginning at dark every day, for a while, just in Broward County. Maybe we'd find out something."

"Aint got many deputies," McCann grumbled. "I might give you two men."

"That would be fine," Hurley said.

"Let's fish," the old sheriff proposed. "Never could mix fishing and talking and do any good."

For another hour, scarcely a word was spoken. The sun dipped toward the

horizon, bringing the short tropical day to an end. The low shoreline of Florida lay to the west, the gray-green of palms and sea grape and palmettos topping the yellow sands of the beach, and splotted here and there by the soft reds of tile roofs.

At last the tuna spurned the bait, and the *Mary B* turned toward Port Everglades. Bob Hurley, infinitely refreshed by a day away from his office, sat there, taking in the beauty of white-crested waves and blue water, breathing deeply the clean, invigorating salt air.

An airplane moved like a hovering buzzard some distance away, over the beach, and Hurley's sharp, practised eyes appraised it curiously. For years he had been in the habit of studying all craft in the air. This one was of a color he had not seen recently, and it circled over a spot on the beach for a moment, as if the pilot might be waving at some friend below. Then, at less than five hundred feet, it turned and headed straight west and quickly passed out of sight.

"Crop-duster," McCann volunteered, seeing Hurley's narrowed gaze. "They's three or four of 'em back over at the edge of the muck lands. Got a field over there. They spray poison dust on the truck-farms around here. Dania is the heart of the truck lands. They been doing right well."

"You've been out there?"

"Two-three times. You don't need to be suspecting them planes of nothing."

"Just habit," Bob Hurley smiled.

The *Mary B* churned in toward its berth, the exhaust a steady, pleasant glubbing murmur that echoed back from the low banks of the channel.

A FEW minutes past midnight, Hurley was called out of bed by the persistent ringing of his telephone. It was Sheriff McCann.

"I put on that beach patrol like I promised," the old man said, his voice

sounding nasal over the wires. "We found something might interest you. A dead man was washed up ashore about where we were fishing this afternoon."

"What's that got to do with dope-smugglers?" Hurley asked, puzzled at why McCann should have wakened him with such news.

"Well, this feller was named Kirk. He had some papers in his pocket said he was out of the Coast Guard, down there in Miami. I thought you might come and take him away."

After a moment of recollection, "Kirk used to be at the Dinner Key base," Hurley said. "He was court-martialed a few months ago for stealing Government property. I haven't seen him since then, but we didn't want him."

Sheriff McCann was plainly disappointed. "Then I got to hold me an inquest and go to a whole mess of trouble trying to hunt up his relatives. Being a Coast Guard feller, I thought—"

Remembering the service the old man had been trying to perform for him when Kirk's body had been discovered, Hurley suggested: "Maybe I can be of some help, with the records we've got. His personnel record will give his kin, and who should be notified."

"Well, now, that's a big help. Could you bring it up right away?"

"Now?" Hurley was a bit astonished.

"Well, I like to do these things as quick as I can. Got to know what to do with him. If I send the messages tonight, that would give me an answer in the morning, in time for the inquest."

"All right," Hurley agreed, and started to dress.

HE stopped at his office and got Kirk's personnel record, and drove to Fort Lauderdale. At the morgue, he met Sheriff McCann. There was an odd look in the old man's faded eyes.

"There's something funny about this here case," he said, just before they went in. "This feller was washed up ashore sometime tonight. He's been drowned. There's water in his lungs, so we know he was drowned. But there's a mark on his throat like somebody choked him. I don't make it out."

"Let's have a look at him."

Kirk had been a thin, wiry man about thirty, well-muscled, but slight. There was, as the sheriff had said, a faint discolored place on his throat; but nothing else indicated that he might have died through violence.

Turning directly toward the men, Hurley cut back the throttles. The crash came a split second later.



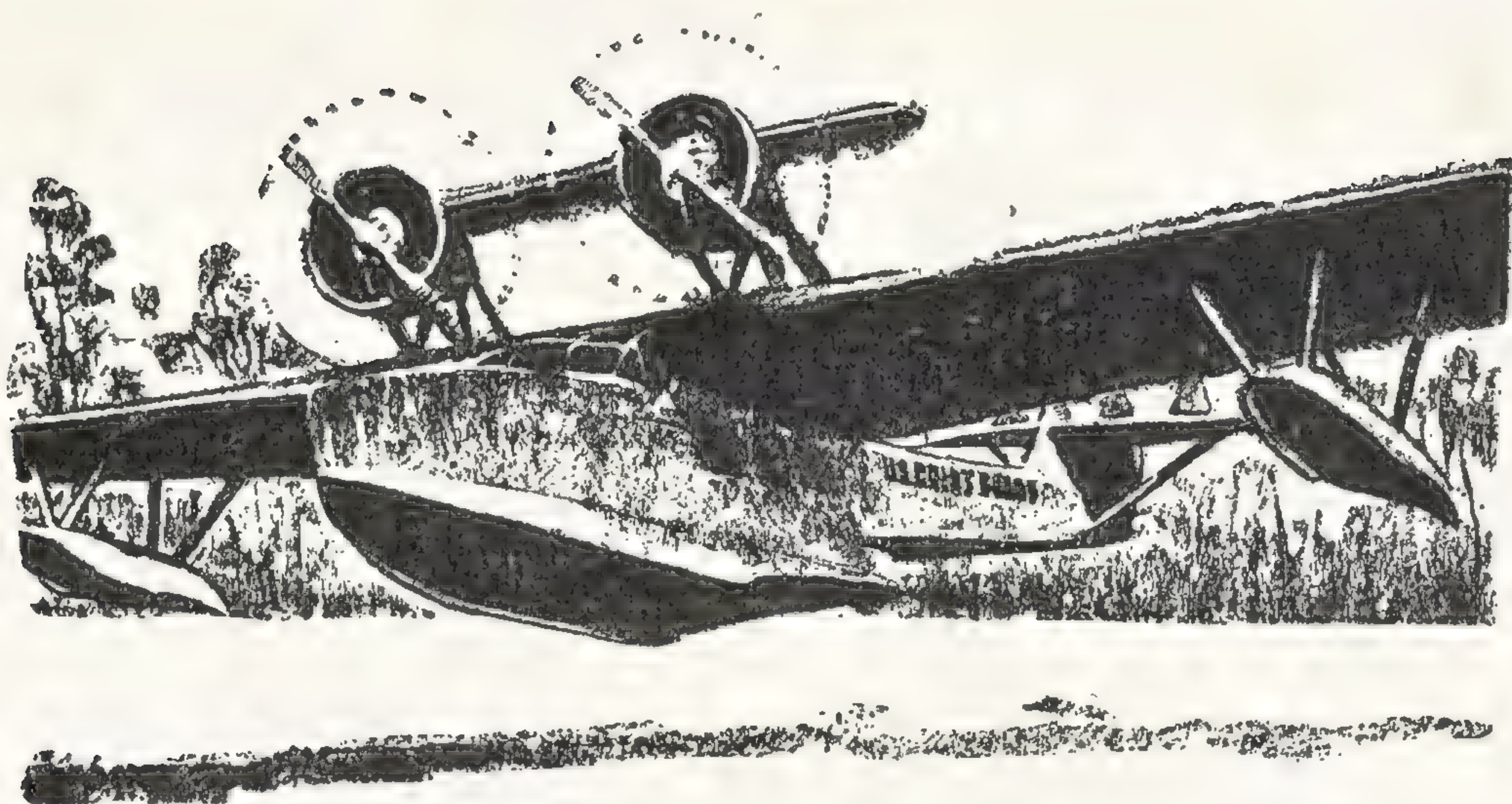
"No bruises or cuts," McCann said. "Just that one little place."

"He might have hit his throat on a gunwale as he fell out of his boat," Hurley suggested.

"Might have. But looks like that would have skinned him up some." The old man shook his head and chewed for a moment in puzzled silence. "I'm going to look into this."

Hurley searched his memory for details of Kirk's past. He recalled that Kirk had been an undisciplined machinist's mate, second class. If Kirk had been an ordinary enlisted man, it might have been difficult to remember much about him, but the reverse of this was now true. He had been intractable and inefficient, the latter largely because he had had a number of interests outside of his routine duties at the Dinner Key base. He had been fond of flying, and on Sundays had done wing-walking with one or two barnstorming pilots at the municipal airport. Somewhere, its origin vague, he had acquired a fast speedboat, and at least on two occasions had put on a stunt in Biscayne Bay which consisted of transferring from that boat, at sixty-five miles an hour, to a rope ladder which dangled from the landing gear or the wing of a low-flying airplane.

Aside from those facts, Hurley knew nothing about him. In the worn wallet lying with his effects, there was a discharge from the Coast Guard; a small



book with a number of names and addresses in it, mostly of women; two night-club cards entitling the bearer to admission—one of these clubs being in Bimini, B.I. There was no money.

"You're going to have to testify at the inquest," Sheriff McCann said. "I'll get this here message off to his brother in Hartford, and we can go on to bed. I'll telephone you when to come up."

"Wait," Hurley said, still examining Kirk's effects. "How could a man fall overboard and drown and wash ashore, and the inside of his shoes still be only damp? There's a yellowish powder on the heel of his sock. It hasn't been wet enough to wash off."

The sheriff carried Kirk's shoes and socks to a better light, and examined them with a squinting attentiveness.

"I'm going to call for an autopsy!" he declared suddenly. "I don't make this out."

"Murder, you think?" Hurley asked.

"Well, if it aint murder, there's still plenty things we got to find out about! I'm going to get Doc Laramie down here. I'll call you in a couple of days. Much obliged for coming up."

"Not at all," Hurley said. "The case interests me."

AT the inquest, which was held at nine o'clock, two mornings later, Doctor Laramie, stooped and white-haired, his equine face having a morosely studious look, explained:

"Death came from drowning, but probably after the victim had been choked to insensibility. The water found in the lungs was not sea water, but fresh water."

"Not sea water!" Hurley ejaculated. "Then—" He broke off, frowning in thought.

"From that, we know the killer threw the body into the surf for a blind," Sheriff McCann said. "He could have been killed almost anywhere. I figure they took him there in a car. I've got me a couple of footprints, and the track of a tire."

"What was the powder in the shoe?" Hurley asked.

"Sulphur," said Doctor Laramie.

"How long had Kirk been dead when the sheriff's men found him?"

"Five or six hours."

"Do you know anybody'd want to kill him?" McCann asked Hurley. "You know his background. Was he tied up with the liquor-smuggling crowd?"

"There was a connection with some of them—how direct, I don't know. Could robbery have been the motive? His money was missing. . . . Could we trace this sulphur?"

"It's a spray they use on truck-crops," Doctor Laramie supplied. "You'll find some of it in almost any truck-farmer's shed."

Sheriff McCann spat with uncanny accuracy into a brass cuspidor. "Why don't you check up on the fellers Kirk knew?" he asked the Coast Guard officer. "You might dig up a motive sooner than I could, knowing 'em. I'd like to have you work on the case with me."

"On the face of it, it looks pretty hopeless," Hurley said. "But I'll find what I can."

"One thing to remember," McCann pointed out, "is the feller who done this tried to make it look like an accident."

So you better make out you think it's an accident, until you've found out all you can."

"Right. I'll call you if I come across something."

AT the Miami municipal airport, talking to tall, scarred Jerry McEvans, Hurley said: "I understand that you worked with Joe Kirk a good deal."

McEvans' black eyes grew guarded. He was dressed in greasy coveralls, and he had the habit of rubbing the open palms of his hands down over his thighs, cleaning them. He rubbed them there now. "I haven't seen Joe for three months," he said cautiously. "What you want with him?"

"What's he been doing in Bimini?"

"How do I know? I never go near Bimini."

"I was in hopes you knew. He was washed up on the beach near Fort Lauderdale, two nights ago, drowned."

"The hell he was!" McEvans exclaimed. "Did he fall overboard, or did somebody bump him?"

Appraising McEvans' face for a moment, Hurley countered, "Do you know anybody who might have wanted to kill him?"

McEvans said quickly: "No sir!" And then: "I didn't do it, Lieutenant. You can check up on me. But that's sure tough. Joe wasn't really a bad guy; he was wild, and all that, but not really bad. You're trying to find out who killed him, I guess."

"I didn't say anybody killed him. I said he was drowned."

"What would he be doing, to fall overboard? He'd been around boats all his life. He never fell overboard. I don't see how it could happen like that."

"I'm checking up and trying to find out," Hurley admitted, offering McEvans a cigarette. "Could you tell me who Kirk had been working with, lately?"

"No, sir, I couldn't. Like I said, I haven't seen him in three months. He used to hang around here quite a bit, but he quit coming, all of a sudden. Tell you the truth, I thought he'd left town."

Hurley nodded thoughtfully. "By the way, what became of that speedboat he had, the one he used to use with you on those boat-to-plane transfers in Biscayne Bay?"

"He sold it. Fella up at Dania bought it, three-four months ago. That was sure a fast boat."

"Was it right after he sold the boat that he quit coming out here?"

"Yes, it was. It sure was."

"Who bought the boat, could you tell me?"

"I don't know his name. But you can find him easy enough. He's the fella has them truck-farm dusting planes back in a little field at the edge of the muck lands behind Dania. He's nuts about speedboats, Joe told me one time."

After a moment Hurley asked: "Does he do anything with those planes—besides crop-dusting?"

McEvans laughed recklessly. "Now, if he did, you know he wouldn't want me to go blabbing that, don't you, Lieutenant? Why, I never even met the man."

Hurley smiled. "Well," he said, "thanks. How's business?"

"Business!" McEvans said ruefully. "It aint. You fellas watch us too close! Since bringing in liquor has been smuggling instead of just liquor-running, I aint moved a peg. Prohibition was swell, but repeal sure ruined me!"

"WHERE can I find Mr. Danley?" Hurley said to a gangly youth the next morning at the airport behind Dania.

"He's flyin'. He aint got time to talk to nobody right now."

"How long will he be flying?"

"Till the dew's off."

"I'll wait," Hurley said pleasantly. "Do you mind if I look around?"

"Help yourself."

The equipment of this field was all of a raw newness that suggested impermanency. There was a sulphur elevator perhaps thirty feet high at one side of the cleared strip, and from it a metal chute extended slanting toward the field, supported by a cantilever brace in the middle and by a post at the end. From the tracks under it, Hurley knew that Danley's planes taxied under the chute to receive their dust loads.

"What do you use for the crop treatment?" he asked the boy.

"Sulphur."

"Plain sulphur?"

"It's got some other stuff with it, but mainly it's sulphur." The boy's small, yellowish eyes roved over the skyline and picked out the airplane that was coming into the field. "Here he comes, now," he said.

The plane dipped over the low pines at the far end of the field and touched the earth gently. With a low chattering

of its exhaust it came toward the loading chute. When it was in place under the spout, the boy leaped up on the wing and busied himself raising the hopper cover. Hurley stepped around the wing to the cockpit.

He got an impression of powerful hands as Danley lifted the goggles from over his eyes, revealing a square, pugnacious, distrustful face. Danley's eyes were close-set and of a pale, steel-blue color. Sulphur-dust lay over his face in a yellow film, except where his goggles had rested, and those clean oval spaces above his cheek-bones made his eyes seem fantastically large. He gave Hurley a quick yet exhaustive scrutiny.

Introducing himself, Hurley said: "Perhaps you've read in the papers about a man named Joe Kirk who was washed ashore two nights ago near Fort Lauderdale. He was formerly a Coast Guardsman. I'm preparing a report on his estate. I understand you bought a speedboat from him—"

"Sure I did," Danley interrupted. "And the guy was hard luck. Two weeks after I got the boat, it caught fire and sank. What about it?"

Conscious of a wary suspicion in Danley, Hurley said: "As nearly as I can learn, the boat was the only thing he owned. May I ask if you had paid him for it, entirely?"

Danley's direct, insolent eyes checked over Hurley's face. "I wish I hadn't, but as it happened, I had."

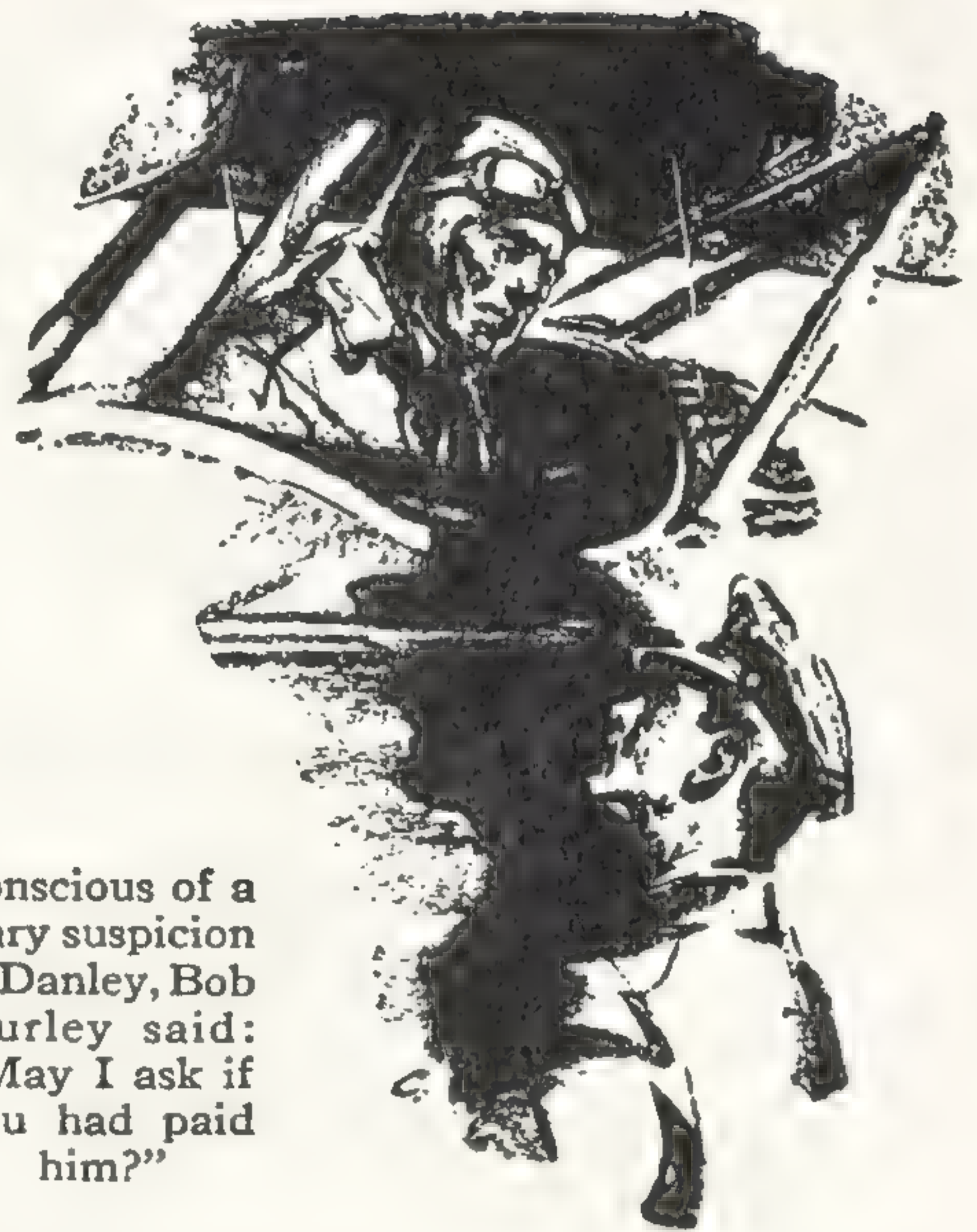
Hurley nodded, giving the plane and the loading equipment his attention. "Interesting operation you have," he said. "How many acres can you spray, at one flight?"

"Not as many as I'd like to. These ships don't carry much load. I had to take out my regular gas-tanks and put in twenty-gallon tanks, but they still don't carry enough dust. Now I can't put in enough gas to get out of the county, but that don't matter, because I don't need to, in this work." He glanced forward at the boy who was loading the hopper, and then back over his shoulder at another plane which was appearing in sight to the north. "I've got to pull out. Anything else?"

"Do you know anything about what Kirk's been doing, lately?" Hurley asked.

Danley pulled his goggles down over his eyes. "I didn't know Kirk hardly at all," he said.

After the plane had gone, Hurley said to the youth in charge of the hopper-



Conscious of a wary suspicion in Danley, Bob Hurley said: "May I ask if you had paid him?"

loading: "Too bad about that boat Mr. Danley lost, wasn't it? Where did it sink?"

The boy looked puzzled. Then he said: "Oh, yes. Dead Man's Bay, he said, where it sank. He was moanin' around here for a month about that."

"Didn't he try to raise it again? It must have been a valuable boat."

"Raise it? In Dead Man's Bay? I asked him about that, mister, but he said you'd never raise no boat out of that bay—'too deep,' he said."

"I was under the impression that Dead Man's Bay was quite shallow," Hurley mused with acutely sharpening interest. Aloud, he said: "Mr. Danley remarked that he'd taken out the regular gas-tanks and put in twenty-gallon tanks. Couldn't he have used the old tanks, putting in only twenty gallons each trip?"

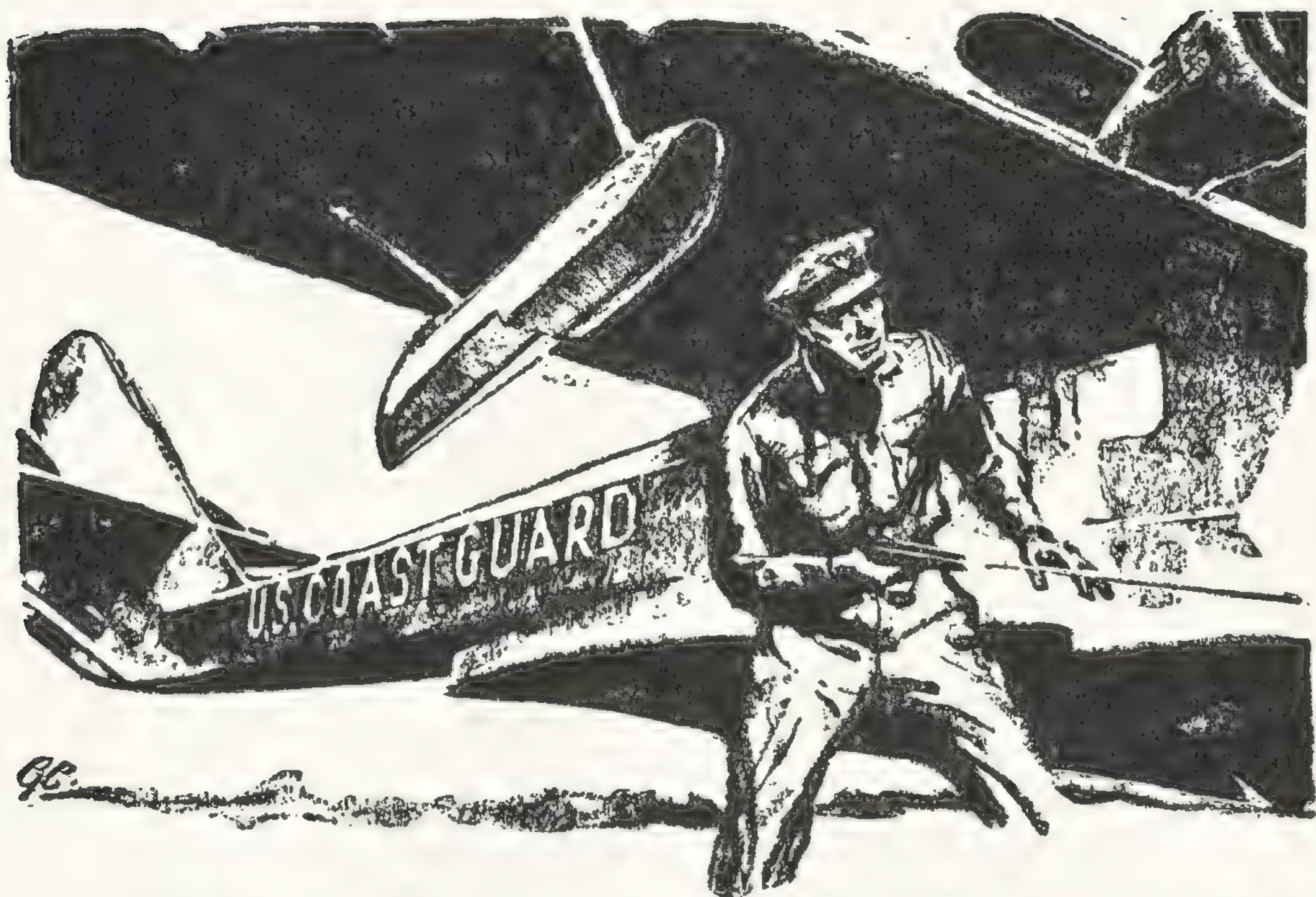
"He said he wanted to save the difference in the weight of the tanks," the boy said. "There're the big ones, over behind the dust elevator."

"Thanks very much," Hurley smiled, and went back to his car.

BACK at Dinner Key base, he said to Commander Newsom, in charge: "I think I've a good lead on the Kirk case. I'd like to take one of the new Grummen amphibians and fly up the coast."

Commander Newsom squinted leathery lids over hard gray eyes. "The Kirk case?" he growled. "With Washington yelling its head off about dope-smuggling, you want to take time for the Kirk case! What—"

"I shouldn't be surprised if the Kirk



A staccato rattle of shots stung through the dusk; Danley sagged toward the ground.

case is involved with our own troubles, too."

"Well, go on then. Why bother me with it? I've got my hands full. A couple of fool kids are lost off Dry Tortugas in a twenty-foot sail-boat, and I've got to find 'em. I'm taking the *Arcturus*."

As soon as the sun was striking straight downward, Hurley took the Grummen and flew north to Dead Man's Bay. He knew the inland waters of the east coast of Florida intimately. The bay he sought was a landlocked sheet of water connected to Biscayne Bay by a dredged channel comprising part of the inland waterway. From the air, over it, he could see the bottom quite plainly, for the water was clear. But though he circled the bay for an hour, he saw no signs of sunken boats of any nature whatever.

Yet he knew that if Danley's boat had been sunk there, it would now be visible from the air.

While he flew southward toward Miami, he puzzled at this. Had Danley lied to the boy about that boat? If so, why?

Could it be because he wanted to use the boat somewhere else, and wanted its absence to seem perfectly natural to everyone who knew he had bought it?

And why had Danley made such a point of explaining the removal of the regular gas-tanks from his planes, and having replaced tanks holding only

twenty gallons? The difference in the weights of the tanks was perhaps thirty-five pounds; the labor involved was enormous. Why?

Was that, perhaps, to prove conclusively to some one that his planes could not fly far enough to reach a place where they might be suspected of going?

Thinking of those things, Hurley remembered what McEvans had said. What had McEvans meant, with that evasive reply about the activities of the planes in the field behind Dania? Did McEvans know something definite?

But if he did, he would never reveal it, Hurley knew well enough. A solution to this mystery would never be found by questioning the men who had been associated with Kirk, who no doubt had for years been themselves engaged in shady operations.

"Twenty gallons of gas," Hurley thought. "Where could a plane fly, on twenty gallons of gas, and land and pick up liquor, or dope, or aliens?"

There was no place. West End was too far away. West End had a field, but Danley would never reach West End with only twenty gallons of fuel. Bimini? He could reach Bimini, but with no landing-field there, how could he operate?

And then, like a flash, as he set the Grummen down on Biscayne Bay, Hurley thought he could see it. He taxied hurriedly to the ramp, where he met



machinist's mate Baxter as he climbed from the cockpit. To Baxter, he shouted: "Get the *Dolphin* ready for flight. Full tanks of gas. You're going with me."

"Anyone else, sir?"

"No one else. We're going alone."

"Yes sir." Baxter trotted into the hangar, and Hurley went into his office and sat down at a chart and drew lines and made thoughtful measurements of nautical distances. The full-throated snarl of the Wasps in the Douglas brought him back to the ramp.

This plane had been an amphibian originally but now the landing-gear had been removed and it was being operated as a seaplane—that change bringing its speed up to a trifle more than a hundred knots, besides lightening its weight six hundred pounds, which made for easier handling in rough seas. Being bi-motored, it was the plane used principally for long-distance flights over water.

They slid down into the bay, Baxter sitting in the co-pilot's seat, a forelock of red hair showing under his cap. He said nothing during the take-off or for the first ten minutes, while they slid past Cape Florida and out over the blue Gulf Stream. Now, as they passed the bobbing field of charter boats farther out, he could contain his curiosity no longer.

"Where we headed, Lieutenant?"

"Bimini," Hurley said succinctly, boring straight eastward over the calm sea.

The flat shoreline of the most westerly island in the British Bahaman group grew up out of the Atlantic, thirty minutes after the take-off. No Coast Guard plane, not on a rescue mission—and then only by permission—was permitted to come closer than three miles to a foreign possession, but keeping that distance, Hurley circled Bimini, scrutinizing the place through his binoculars. He had always known that there was no field where a land plane might safely alight, there. Now he made doubly sure. Beyond that reassurance, however, he could learn nothing. The distance was much too great to permit identification of the boats which were anchored in the lagoon, and he would not have been able to recognize Joe Kirk's speedboat even if he had located it there.

After that, he withdrew to the southeast, and climbed to six thousand feet in a cloudless sky, and started cruising back and forth in a semicircle which kept him constantly at the same distance from the island. At forty-percent power, the Wasps murmured contentedly. An hour dragged past, utterly boring, while the sun dipped to the westward. There now was not more than another hour of daylight remaining.

"What's up, Lieutenant?" Baxter asked quietly, at last.

"I'm waiting to see. Keep that lagoon under your glasses."

Nothing happened. Bimini lay in the tranquil calm that had surrounded it through these thousands of years. The dying sun shimmered on the flat blue of the sea. Hurley had plenty of gas to permit him to sit here till midnight, but darkness would obliterate all traces of what might take place down there, once darkness came.

Yet he didn't think the thing could be accomplished at night. This might not be the day, but he felt sure the day would come—and he was going to be hanging here in the sky to see it—when ever it happened.

He was about to swing westward for the return to Miami when Baxter passed him the glasses excitedly.

"There's a plane circling the lagoon," Baxter yelled. "Is that what you're waiting for?"

Through the binoculars, Hurley picked out the silvery wings. They merged with the sheen of the sea, and he lost them, but found them again as they passed the dark fleck of land. And as he watched, he felt a surge of grim satisfaction.

For there appeared suddenly a white lane in the water that lengthened behind a tiny boat which was driving through the lagoon like a spearhead. The plane juggled for position directly above it, and quickly dipped low—until it seemed from this altitude that the plane was going to dive into the water. But it didn't. It dipped low, and hovered a moment there, stalling, matching the speed of the boat for no more than five seconds. Then it climbed steeply.

The whole operation had required perhaps two minutes. The plane, climbing, was turning westward. The boat's wake curled back toward the shore. Through his glasses, Bob Hurley recognized the plane as being one of those he had seen at Danley's airport behind Dania.

He sucked in his breath and turned tensely in pursuit. He gunned the Wasps wide, and nosed the Douglas down slightly, descending in a long power dive that built up the speed until wind drummed on the struts and shrieked at the windshield.

But even with the added power of gravity spurring the Douglas, it did not seem to gain on the fleeing plane. Hurley slid down to two thousand feet, and all this time Danley's craft had been climbing slowly to two thousand, so that now they were on the same level, racing over the broad, dusk-purple sea, without any change whatever in their relative positions. The *Dolphin* was three miles behind, and slowly dropping back farther.

"Lieutenant," Baxter shrilled frantically, "he's gettin' away!"

HANDS taut on the controls, Hurley nodded, wondering if Danley knew he was being pursued. At this rate, he would reach his airport with a three- or four-minute lead—enough time to transfer the evidence to a car and get it started off safely. Excitement drummed at Bob Hurley's nerves, setting his pulse pounding. That old trick which Kirk had performed so proudly with McEvans in more fortunate days, of transferring from a speedboat to a plane! How cleverly Danley had worked it!

But Hurley realized swiftly that if he failed to catch Danley now, he had accomplished nothing more than the breaking up of the operation. For the man could land his plane there in the pines, and himself disappear, along with his dope—and he might escape northward under cover of darkness and never be found. He probably had a get-away al-

ready planned, every element thought out in advance.

"Get on the radio and call the Base," Hurley shouted at Baxter. "They won't have time to get a plane ready, but tell 'em to call Sheriff McCann in Fort Lauderdale. Have him go to Danley's airport as fast as he can, with two deputies. He'll probably meet Danley coming out on that trail. Tell him to arrest Danley for running morphine, and for the murder of Kirk. Got it?"

Baxter looked at him with wide eyes. "Murder? Is this guy a killer?"

"Unless I've got everything wrong. Step on it!"

BAXTER nodded and moved lithely back to the radio panel. He adjusted his headphones and fingered the dials tentatively, then started pounding the key. Hurley, desperately urging the *Dolphin* to still greater speed, sat with one hand on the controls, the other one lifting binoculars intermittently to his eyes.

There was no distinguishable gain. But he was holding his own.

Baxter came forward, a perplexed, worried look on his face. "Can't raise 'em," he said hurriedly. "Skip-distance is awful bad this time of evening. They aint switched to night frequency yet, and I tried 'em on day."

Hurley took another quick look at the other craft through his glasses. He shoved his cap back and wiped perspiration from his forehead. It was hot in the cockpit. The engine's vibration made every instrument needle quiver.

"Have you ever seen one of these crocks landed on land—without any wheels?"

Baxter rubbed the side of his nose with a greasy thumb, leaving a smudge. He said, "My God, Lieutenant! You'd wreck it. Without any wheels, on the hull—"

"That's what I mean—how badly will I wreck it?"

"The only one I ever saw, Lieutenant, the motor fell out and came down through the cockpit and killed the poor guy!"

Hurley raised his binoculars once more, briefly. "Danley's going to get away clean, if we try to go to the Base and change ships. If we're going to get him at all, we've got to land right behind him, on his own field."

Baxter glanced up through the windshield, first to one engine and then the other. His face was frightened but resolute. "Okay, Lieutenant," he said.

Hurley said, "I'm going to land in the channel of Port Everglades long enough to let you jump to the dock. You get Sheriff McCann on the telephone. The two of you block the road that comes out from Danley's field. Don't let him get past."

"You say he's a killer?" Baxter repeated. "Okay. I'll commandeered a car. Lieutenant, you got a gat?"

Hurley nodded, patting his armpit, and took another quick look through the glasses, and swung the *Dolphin* a little north toward Fort Lauderdale.

The coast was five miles away, now. The dusting plane was perhaps four miles ahead. Hurley knew he was gaining a little. He was going to lose time, landing, but that couldn't be helped.

In a harsh, nerve-racking haste, he wheeled the plane over the harbor and swung back into the wind and eased off his throttles. The wind sluffed to a whistle. In a stall, he dropped the *Dolphin* over the west bulkhead into the water, heavily, so that it hit with a terrific impact and bounced once and then buried itself in its own spray. As fast as he could, Hurley maneuvered close to a dock. Baxter climbed out on the steps and locked the hatch again, then leaped to the planking. Hurley gunned the Wasps wide and streaked down the channel and once more into the air.

Grimly, he tried to keep his mind off the landing. He turned westward, staying low, heading to that spot behind Dania. Truck farmers, startled by the snarl of his props, raised from their stooped positions and looked up in wonder and waved. Hurley searched the dusk-clouded horizon, but Danley's plane was now nowhere in sight.

AHEAD, he could see the scar in the pines, marking the field. He roared over the field, and as he looked down he saw the plane drawn up near the loading chute. Danley was standing beside it, and two men were walking toward it from behind the dust elevator. One of them got into a car and drove the car up to the side of the plane. They weren't hurrying. They knew this plane couldn't land here. It was a seaplane, without wheels, and it could land only on water. Hurley roared on, and then banked steeply back into the wind. Through his spray-splotched windshield he could see Danley gesticulate with sudden haste.

Hurley knew the danger of this landing. But he cut his throttles and nosed

down into his glide. He held his breath, fingering over his safety-belt to see that it was tight and would hold him. He could see those men down there unloading something.

The blotched sand of the field was flowing past ten feet underneath the hull now. The nose was up, the engines idling. Hurley had one hand on the switches, to cut them just before the crash-impact should come. And then he saw that he was too late. The men down there had the object out of the plane, and were running toward the car with it. If they got to the car, and got the car out of the way—

He suddenly decided to take a long chance. He had to stake everything on surviving it. He blurped his throttles wide-open for two seconds, picking up speed. Then, turning directly toward the other plane, and the car, and the men, he cut back the throttles, judging his speed and his distance acutely. At last he did cut the switches. He hauled the nose up, feeling the Douglas sink toward the ground, timed to land and crash into the other plane there.

IN a grimly exultant satisfaction, he saw Danley wave a warning at the other men who were helping him. The driver of the car jumped from his seat, and all three men started running—running back toward the dust elevator, out of danger of this imminent crash.

The crash came a split second later.

It was not head-on. At the last moment, Hurley kicked the Douglas around, so that it landed, its hull ripping into the ground with a sickening impact, fifteen feet to one side and twenty feet away from the dusting plane. Hurley had meant, by that turn, to miss the other ship altogether, but he didn't quite miss it. The left wing of the *Dolphin* sliced into the other plane's right wing, and the *Dolphin* pivoted slightly. It made a slithering turn. There was a dull, rending report, the shocking sound of splintering wood. It careened up and for a prolonged, awful instant seemed about to nose over.

Then it stopped. It stopped and fell back, the left wing sandwiched between the duster's two wings, tangled in fabric and wires. Bob Hurley pulled his arms down from over his face, where he had reflexively thrown them. With a service .45 in his hand, he ducked back through the cabin and opened the hatch and leaped to the ground—just in time to

face Danley and the others as they dived frantically toward that paper-wrapped package that lay near the car.

Danley stopped in his tracks, a murderous look on his face. He snatched at his shoulder and a gun came out with his hand, just as a staccato rattle of shots stung through the dusk. Danley sagged toward the ground, the gun dropping out of his hand, his face showing pain and surprise. The other two men raised their hands obeying Bob Hurley's snarl:

"Don't try it!"

He kicked the gun out of Danley's convulsive reach. He searched the other two quickly, finding no weapons, and forced them to stand, face to the wall, against the dust elevator. Then he knelt beside Danley.

"This is what I'm interested in," he said, indicating the package of morphine; "but why did you kill Joe Kirk?"

Danley's eyes were sardonic, contemptuous. His fingers were clenching and unclenching in the sand.

"You're done for," Hurley urged soberly. "You'd better come clean."

Danley coughed rackingly, and a froth of blood appeared on his lips. He said painfully, "Kirk—tried to—rat out on—me." He gasped, and another convulsion shook him terribly. Just then Sheriff McCann slid his car to a stop near by, and with two men hurried to where Hurley was bending over Danley.

"Hello, son," McCann said, taking everything in through quick, keen eyes. "Glad you're all right."

Hurley said: "Danley admits killing Joe Kirk. I guess that winds up the case. I've got my evidence too—they were smuggling morphine."

McCann put handcuffs on the two by the elevator. He came back to Hurley. "You did a mighty slick job," he complimented, "but how did you know he killed Joe Kirk?"

"I didn't," Hurley admitted. "But I knew he and Kirk were tied up together some way, especially after seeing how they got this stuff in. So I just assumed it."

McCann surveyed the wreckage of the planes. "Them fellers in Washington sure ought to appreciate this," he declared.

Hurley grimaced. "Maybe," he said. "But I don't know how I'll explain landing that Douglas out here on its hull. It's supposed to be an amphibian. The brass-hats will think I forgot to roll down the wheels!"

Maybe

The not-soon-forgotten story of a pacifist who went down fighting—by the author of "The Pirate's Beard" and "No Flame More Fierce."

HIS name was F. Langford Parfitt, and he came to us like a portable Vesuvius, massive and picturesque and filled with rumblings. He was nothing less than a giant; but his pink and babyish face was oddly too small for his body. Not even the masculine dignity of his stubby curved pipe could alter that. His heavy tweeds gave him a rather overstuffed appearance; yet he managed to carry his bulk with a certain grace and poise.

Our false impression of Parfitt dated from the day he walked into the city-room to take his job. He came as a surprise, for not even Emmett Marsh knew that the Old Man had taken him on. He just loomed in the doorway, his hands deep in his pockets, and lumbered over to Marsh's desk like the Mountain coming to Mahomet. He stood there for a moment waiting; but getting no attention at all from Marsh, who was swearing over the make-up forms, he rumbled:

"Hello. You're the city editor?"

Marsh only glared, grumbled and returned to his forms. The pink giant tried again.

"Hope you don't mind a little extra weight on the staff. The boss told me to come in and go to work."

That did it. Marsh sat back and bristled.

"Whaddya mean, go to work? This is a newspaper, not a sideshow."

Of course, that was a dirty crack. Marsh was reasonably annoyed that the Old Man should hire anybody without consulting him, and it was not the first time, nor the second nor the third. The Old Man had his weaknesses, and one of his worst was this business of making "discoveries." Still, it was a dirty crack, and nobody would have blamed Parfitt if he had taken offense.

But he didn't. He only puffed on his pipe meditatively and contemplated

He Was a Hero

By FULTON
GRANT

Illustrated by Austin Briggs



Peacemaker Parfitt, beaten, kicked, trampled, never once stopped his lecture on the futility of violence. He merely sat—and took it.

Marsh. Then he broke into a good-natured pink grin and said:

"Listen, Mister. I was an advertised-food baby, and I'm not responsible for my excess avoirdupois, so don't hold it against me. And the boss did hire me, so I guess that puts me on the staff. How about it?"

It was a civil, decent reply; and to give Marsh credit, he calmed at once.

"Sorry I snapped," he said. "But I do like to pick my own men on this paper. Find yourself a desk and a typewriter and move in. You're on the staff."

That episode happened in France, and in 1933. The newspaper was the Paris edition of the New York *Star-Telegram*. It was late in November, as I recall it. I mentioned above that we got a false impression of Parfitt, and it was that episode that caused it. The thing we came to call his "League of Nations complex" was obvious even then, but we never caught on. That is why I can write this story.

I WANT to say this about reporting on the Paris edition of an American newspaper: It is unlike any other job on any other newspaper in the world. The *Star* was published for the American colony abroad; and for those who don't know, that makes it a special kind of a paper—a small-town sheet which has to be run on the lines of a fast, big-town sheet. In other words, the circulation is small and intimate, but the bulk of the news we carried was major-league stuff: A.P. and U.P. dispatches, international events, highlights on American politics, last-minute flashes from the States—and especially local news with an American angle. That means that if a Frenchman should bite a dog, it was no news for us, but if an American should do the biting it was. Get it?

The men on the *Star's* staff were all American-trained. The night staff was made up of fast, hard-boiled rewrite men from our metropolitan dailies. But the day staff used a very special bunch. They had to qualify as reporters in the American sense, but they had to know French, and Paris and Europe in general. And they were pretty hard to find. An ordinary leg-man was just dead wood, and most of the Europe-wise Americans who apply for those jobs may be swell café-hounds, but as news-hounds they are a collection of flops.

Parfitt turned out to be a "natural." He knew his languages and his Conti-

nent, and he had a real flair for news. It didn't take us very long to discover this, and to admire him accordingly. Newspaper men are pretty quick to recognize a man who knows his job and does it.

But it was the "League of Nations complex" that brought on the trouble. That dangerous psychosis finally penetrated and made us notice it during the messy period which everybody who was there refers to as the "Stavisky riots." That was early in January, 1934.

Probably you remember how a crook named Serge Alexandre Stavisky filched several billions of francs from the public pocketbook in the greatest swindle racket of all time. What was worse, France woke up one day and discovered that many of the honorable gentlemen whom the voters had elected to public office were mixed up in the racket. Scandals broke. Cabinets fell. People went out into the streets and shouted down the Government. There were funny scenes, and bloody scenes. And it all ended in one of the dirtiest riots on record, when the Garde Civile fired bullets into tens of thousands of loyal, patriotic men who had assembled in the Place de la Concorde to protest against their crooked office-holders. That day was February 6, 1934; and on the pages of French history it is called "Bloody Tuesday." Frenchmen will always think of it with horror. I was there, and I saw that horror. . . .

The *Star* made no special effort to "cover" the riots when they began, since there was no "American angle." But it wasn't long before F. Langford Parfitt and his League of Nations complex furnished us the missing angle.

ONE January night four of us were sitting in the Café Buonaparte in the street which bears the same historical name, drinking and playing a little bridge. There were Spencer Gail and Corny Bull and yours truly, and especially friend Parfitt.

Outside in the street, gangs of young Royalists were raising hell. They were screaming, "*À bas les Deputes!* Down with the crooked Deputies!" and they were fighting the cops who tried to break up their rioting. Naturally there were fist-fights and clubbings, and it was a messy business in general.

As for us, we stayed in the café and minded our business. We had been over there long enough to know that foreigners should be seen as little as possible



Never heeding the fall, nor the flailing hoofs,
Parfitt wrenched himself free.

and heard not at all when the French are having political troubles. It is only fair to say that we were all drinking Pernod, a fact which may or may not have influenced the events that ensued.

Suddenly a stone came through the plate-glass window at the front of the café. It crashed. Some one screamed. Lights went out. People scurried and yelled in the dark. Doors opened and slammed. The whole place was in an uproar.

Spencer Gail whispered to me:

"Hey, Brownie, let's scam through the back door. There's an exit through the men's room."

I thought that was good advice and started to go, but a big hand reached out of the gloom and grabbed me, while Parfitt's basso-profundo boomed out:

"Don't get excited, son. Don't anybody move. Just sit tight, and we'll keep out of this jam."

Of course, that made sense. The next moment the lights went on again, and we were glad we hadn't made a move. Three blue-coated cops came in, charging and waving their white sticks. At the table next to ours, where nobody had been sitting a moment before, was a frightened lad in a torn coat trying to act as though he had been there all night. At the next table was a scared girl who may have been waiting for a boy friend,

since she had been there some time. The cops took one look around and saw the boy. They didn't tumble to his act, and one of them flung his night-stick. It caught the young fellow a wicked crack between the eyes. He crumpled and sank to the table, moaning.

Then the cops charged.

The girl screamed and threw herself in the way of the first cop. He kicked her with his heavy boot, and she sprawled under her own table, while the officer jumped on the moaning boy.

The kick was too much for Corny Bull. That red-head is short, muscular and full of dynamite. Before anyone could stop him, he had cleared the table and was making a flying tackle. His hundred and forty pounds of mad muscle hit the cop's midsection. They sprawled on the floor; but Corny, up in an instant, had taken three rapid smacks at the second cop before you could swallow a drink.

And right then F. Langford Parfitt did his stuff.

"Don't be a damned fool, Corny," he rumbled, and his big frame rolled onto the scene of action like a ten-ton tank, while his great paw gathered our fiery little brick-top under his wing and held him powerless.

"Never get mixed up in brawls, son," Parfitt went on. "Let's all keep calm and cool, now."

Then he turned on the cops, who were a bit staggered at the size of the man, and gave them their lecture then and there, while Corny dangled in midair from his arm.

"Messieurs," boomed Parfitt in slow but excellent French, "it is that this is an error. We are of the press American, my friends and I. We are not involved in the politics of your country. Nevertheless, messieurs, we cannot approve of violence. But no, messieurs. Permit us to apologize for the impetuosity of our friend. But it is that we Americans are not accustomed to witnessing attacks upon defenseless women. It is for that that my friend became angered. *Oui, messieurs*. You will accept our apologies, *n'est-ce pas?* *Allez*, my little policemen, arrest your man if you must, but do not kick women. Do not act like savage beasts. Physical violence is never essential. It is but the expression of the failing mind—"

His voice rumbled on like the bourdonning of an organ as he towered over the disconcerted cops. He smiled archly, like a school-teacher, and shook a finger of one hamlike hand at them, holding little Corny under his other wing, kicking and swearing. Parfitt expanded his theme. He philosophized; he aphorized; he babbled on, completely oblivious of the stupidity of his act, in a discourse on the uselessness of physical violence.

WELL, stupid or not, it might have worked—it might have flabbergasted those cops. But Corny spoiled it. While Parfitt was still carrying on, Corny worked a hand free. A beer-glass was just within his reach on a table—a heavy one, too. Before anyone noticed him, he had caught the glass and flung it at the head of one of the cops, yelling something in English which we can't print here. He missed the cop by a foot, but he started action.

The cop swung on Corny with his stick. Corny couldn't dodge, because of Parfitt's arm around him. The stick landed full on Corny's eye, and blood spurted.

The next thing I knew we were all on the floor, milling, fighting, being kicked in the face, trampled, mauled and beaten. Worse, it happened in the dark, because some thoughtful person switched the lights off again. Then a club hit me across the head; and I came to, sometime later, stretched on a table with somebody swabbing my face.

The swabber was Parfitt—bloody from head to foot. His clothes were nearly torn off, and he had lost some teeth; but his baby face was still grinning while he boomed at me, loudly and drawlingly:

"There you are, son. You aren't dead yet, hey? But now you see how useless it is to fight. Physical violence is a rank form of arrested mental development. Now if you'd only listened to Old Man Parfitt—"

I refrain from writing what I told him.

TO take inventory of the whole show, I learned that I had been unconscious for twenty minutes. Spencer Gail had a cracked rib and a broken arm, and he sat there wrapped in bloody bandages, dripping gore and profanity. Corny Bull went to the American hospital by taxi. That cop's nightstick had smashed his eye, chipped the frontal bone, cut the temple artery. Corny will never use that eye again.

And the choice bit is that Peacemaker Parfitt never lifted a finger in his own defense or ours. He was beaten, kicked, rolled on the floor and trampled, but he never once stopped his stupid lecture about the futility of violence. He merely sat and remonstrated—and took it. Madame Surat, who owns the café, told me about it. She said he might have been killed if a whistle had not blown outside and called the cops away to other duties.

League of Nations complex!

That was a pretty bad show, but there was more to come.

Not to catalogue all of the incidents that inspired us to tie a name to Parfitt's misguided peacemaking, I will tell you just two brief ones.

I was the victim next time. It happened at a bar. Most things do, apparently. The bar was in Montparnasse, and I had gone there with Parfitt for some reason or other. Parfitt was tight, to put it mildly, but of course, as the old wheeze goes, "liquor never affects me"—much!

Anyhow, Parfitt was singing a good old hymn, in his deep bass voice, and trying to carry all the parts together.

A sensitive foreigner, who, I think, was Rumanian, didn't like Parfitt's music, and I don't know that I blame him. He came over and said so in fairly obnoxious language. Parfitt never batted an eye, but continued to bellow. The Rumanian said, inappropriately:

"Pig of a dirty American, *ta gueule!*"

Parfitt smiled, said, "Nuts!" and continued singing.

The Rumanian sneered: "All Americans are pigs. You are a bigger American pig."

That riled me, and I smacked the Rumanian. I admit it was stupid, but there you are.

Now, the Rumanian had a lot of friends as sensitive as he. The next thing I knew, all those friends were piling on top of me. I managed to clear for action and started to go to work, but Parfitt's big hand grabbed me and held me with a strength that could have been better employed otherwise, while he started once more on his long philosophical dissertation on the subject of violence.

The Rumanians seemed to like that. They kicked me in sensitive places, broke a wineglass in Parfitt's face, and finally smashed a small stool over my head. The slaughter was stopped by three waiters, but not before I had acquired a collection of scars that looked like the mess I gathered at Chateau Thierry.

League of Nations complex!

Parfitt didn't wait long to pull another one of these pacific gestures. The very next day, pretty much bandaged up from his Rumanian adventure, he was drinking beer in a favorite place on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. He was alone, thank God. Near him at a bar were a tough Frenchman and his girl, who was probably just as tough. They were having a private fight; there were no public invitations. Suddenly the girl turned on her boy-friend and ripped his face with her nails from ear to jowl. Whereat the boy-friend hauled off and knocked the girl off her stool.

Then F. Langford Parfitt put on his act.

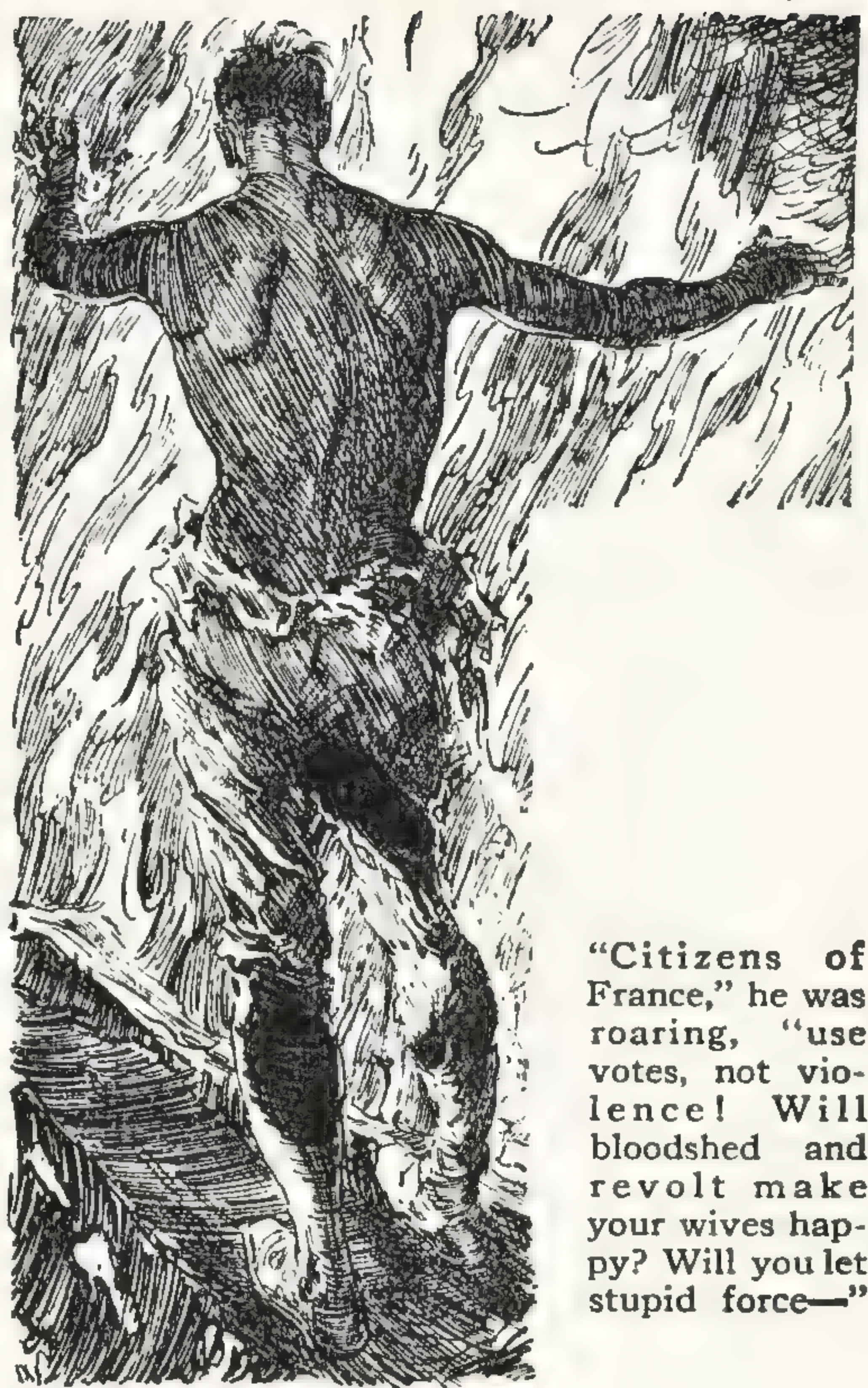
"But no, my friend," he rumbled. "One does not strike a woman."

"*Salaud!*" replied the Frenchman, which is a dirty word.

"And it is foolish to indulge in violence, my old," Parfitt went on blandly.

At that juncture the girl broke a glass across her friend's head; whereupon her friend kicked her across the bar. It wasn't pretty, but those things happen.

Parfitt's brawny arm reached out and "restrained" the man, while he continued his stupid penny lecture. I can think of nothing more ridiculous, and the next minute ought to have been a lesson to him. It was the classical, normal reaction that you've seen staged in a hun-



"Citizens of France," he was roaring, "use votes, not violence! Will bloodshed and revolt make your wives happy? Will you let stupid force—"

dred burlesque shows. The girl saw her boy-friend being "restrained"—and she pulled a little knife out of somewhere and slashed Parfitt's left arm with it. She might have ripped his throat too, but other drinkers moved in and held her back.

I learned this whole story when I was sent to the police station to get our peace-loving reporter released and to pay his fine for disorderly conduct.

League of Nations complex!

But to get on with the main story: Emmett Marsh decided that the Stavisky riots were growing important. Frankly, we all feared a real revolution, and we got orders to cover the mob scenes on the streets. The Chautemps Cabinet had fallen. Edouard Daladier had been made Prime Minister. People thought at first that Daladier would straighten things out, but he didn't. He made some mistakes which nearly precipitated action that would have made the Reign of Terror look like a pink tea party. These are facts of history, not merely my opinion.

ON February 4, the public got tired of Daladier. On that day the new Premier ordered a detachment of machine-guns to march through the city. It was interpreted as a warning to citi-



zens in case they wanted more riots. It succeeded in inflaming them to white heat. Fatal gesture!

On February 5, gendarmes were called in from the country, and five thousand special policemen were posted in various parts of Paris. The Deputies met in their big chamber on the Quai d'Orleans. Citizens of France were waiting for these gentlemen to lay aside their private political interests and to act for their country. It was their one big chance,

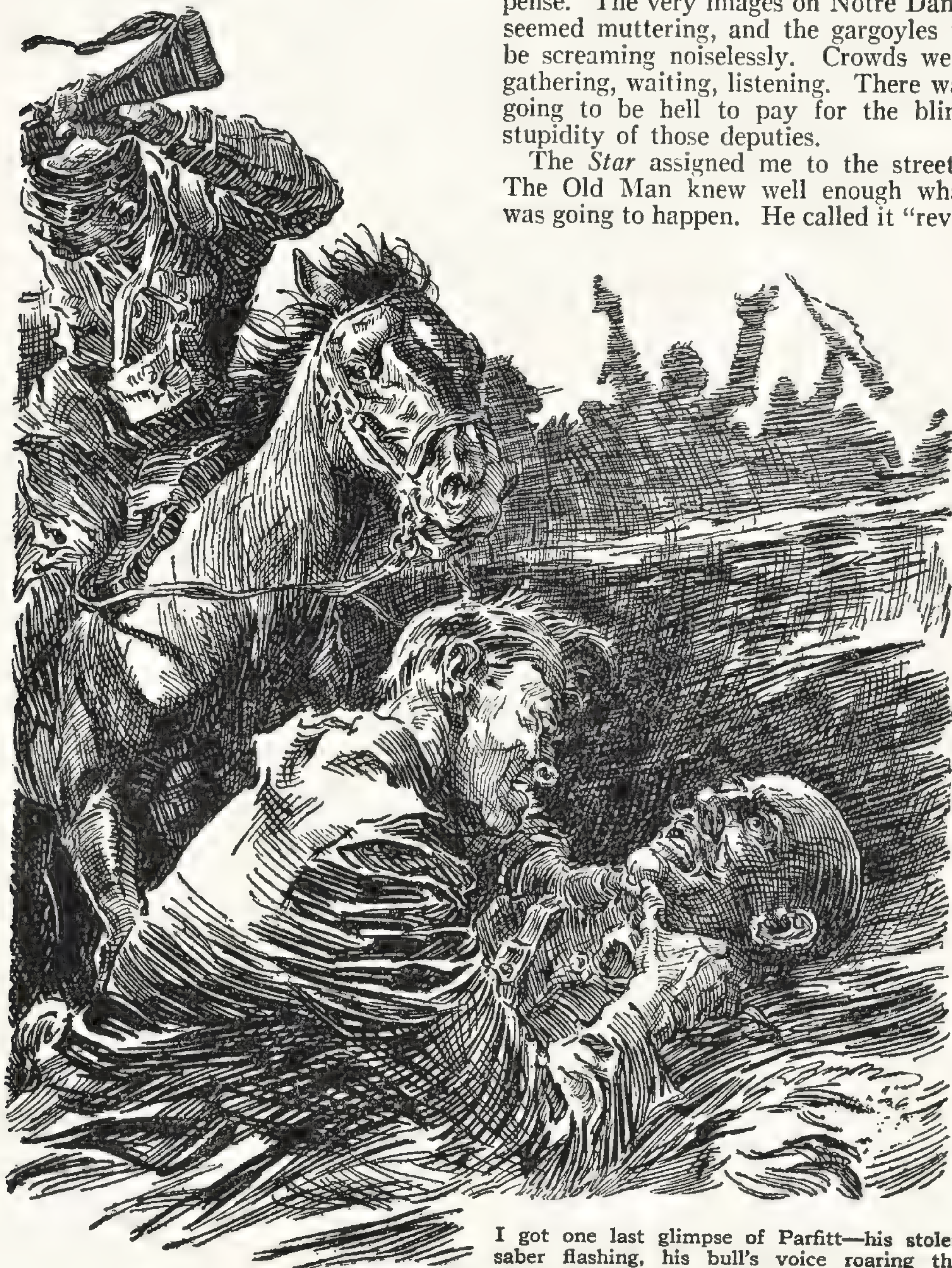
and they missed it. The Deputies persisted in passing the buck; they put off any sanctions in the Stavisky scandals by using parliamentary red tape. They wanted to whitewash their own gang.

That blunder cost hundreds of lives.

A great scaly beast called Revolution lifted up its ugly head. Paris air was charged with doleful electricity. A Shadow stalked the streets of the city. A slumbering ogre stirred in his sleep.

February 6 dawned gray and dire. There was an atmosphere of tragic suspense. The very images on Notre Dame seemed muttering, and the gargoyles to be screaming noiselessly. Crowds were gathering, waiting, listening. There was going to be hell to pay for the blind stupidity of those deputies.

The *Star* assigned me to the streets. The Old Man knew well enough what was going to happen. He called it "revo-



I got one last glimpse of Parfitt—his stolen saber flashing, his bull's voice roaring the chant: "*Allons, enfants de la patrie!*"

lution," and he meant it. I spent the day running about and getting what we call "humanities" on spotty riots in divers parts of Paris. But nothing much happened until night.

DARK closed in about seven o'clock. I went to dinner feeling uneasy. At seven-thirty I phoned the office and gave them what stuff I had gathered. Emmett Marsh told me to hurry over to the Place de la Concorde, where things were popping. I took a taxi and hurried. The chauffeur was frightened stiff, and believe me, so was I. But I could never make you realize the terror in the air that day, so I won't attempt it.

My chauffeur refused to go farther than the Louvre. He was scared and shaking, and I didn't blame him. Down the *quais* I could see a long marching column of serious men, moving like a vast serpent, like a tremendous tide, drawn toward the maelstrom at the Concorde, and bent on destruction. They marched twenty abreast, forming a solid mass as far as the eye could follow toward the Chatelet. They were singing the Marseillaise. The unseen rumbling forces, of which those men were only a symbol, had frightened my taxi-driver almost beyond control. He didn't even wait for his fare; and that, for a Frenchman, is superlative.

The very air of Paris was laden and thick with menace. Ghostly faces, phantoms of a Marat, of a Danton, of a Robespierre, loomed over the Seine's murky mist. And the marching citizens marched on.

I walked down to the Concorde, where was shouting, the din of battle, and where were flames. Multitudes were surging, straining against other multitudes. My job was to walk into this jam, into this *mêlée*; and I never liked anything less in my life.

I worked my way down the Rue de Rivoli. Behind the columns of the Hotel Crillon I took shelter. I could stay there and watch,—watch battle and murder and insane idealism at work in the Place,—and be in comparative safety. There were already tens of thousands there fighting, and thousands more pouring in.

"À mort, Daladier!"

"À bas les Deputes!"

"Brulons le Palais . . . à mort les voleurs!"

"Death to Daladier! Down with the crooked Deputies! Burn the Palace!

Frenchmen for France, and to hell with crooked politicians!"

That is what they were shouting. And the vast, ominous *maestoso* of the great anthem *La Marseillaise* pulsed and reverberated from the age-old façades of the buildings, ricocheting across the Tuileries, which had run with blood only a few score years before.

The crowd had captured and overturned a large city bus. In flames, its spouting fire cast weird shadows on the mob's faces. Suddenly I saw a curious and pathetic sight. Up on top of the burning bus where the flames had not reached, was a solitary figure of a man. His clothes had been torn off to the waist. His body glistened with sweat. His arms were waving. His voice arose even above the terrific din of struggle that was all about him. . . . I ventured closer. I listened. I was amazed.

"Citizens of France," he was roaring tremendously, "go back to your homes before it is too late. Use votes, not violence! Go back to your families, your children and your wives. What have you to do with violence? Will bloodshed and revolt make your wives happy? Will you let stupid force cheat you of your birthright?"

Some wag in the mob threw a vegetable. It struck the orator in the small of his back. Juice dripped. A few rioters found time to laugh.

A flying wedge of policemen charged from the bridge. The mob gave, then surged back and flowed over the cops. There were cries of pain, thuds, crushing of bodies. The policemen merely vanished from my sight, absorbed in the tide.

"Fools! Madmen!" the orator was roaring. "Can blood make you free from swindlers? Go back—"

SOMETHING about the voice seemed familiar. I pushed my way closer, risking another police charge.

"Meet them with calm dignity, not with force!"

The mob howled him down. "Kill! Kill the Deputies!"

Another charge of blue-coats, this time on prancing horses. They spurred into the mob. There were women among those patriots rioting there. A woman's piercing scream stabbed the night. The mob gave before the fury of the horsemen. Men and women were trampled, crushed under shod horse-hoofs. Sabers flashed and beat down upon defenseless heads. The mob gave, then surged for-

ward again. I saw a razor strapped to a cane. I saw it slice the hamstring of a fine horse. I heard the horse scream in mortal agony. Horse and officer fell. The cop was stripped naked, beaten with his own saber, then trampled under the feet of the multitude. The mob surged again and forced me almost up to the flaming bus, where I could still hear the lonely pacifist shouting his futile plea:

"Back to your babies . . . give way before it is too late!"

And then I knew him. It was the poor benighted fool, the fanatical, pathetic dumb-bell Parfitt.

The law charged again.

NOW it was the *sapeurs-pompier*s, the firemen, with their powerful hoses. A stream nearly ten inches thick burst full into the crowd, knocking men and women down like tenpins. Another stream, ironically, found Parfitt at the crest of a wild gesticulation. Its force lifted his two-hundred-pound body like a feather. He hurtled through the air for ten feet or more, and crashed onto the cement pavement.

The crowd surged over him, past him. I saw him struggle to his feet and wave his arms. Even the hose and the ridiculousness of his fall could not dampen that misguided fanaticism of his.

But tragedy came then.

There was a spluttering sound from the direction of the bridge. Silence followed, a hushed, awful pause. Almost with one voice the mob roared. The spluttering again. Machine-guns? Automatics? I couldn't tell. I started to break for the safety of the stone columns of the Crillon. The mob stood still, bewildered, shocked into speechlessness, that Frenchmen should have fired upon brother Frenchmen. A single shot rang out. High on the Crillon balcony, a scream. Another shot, another and another. I saw men fall, writhing. I saw a hundred horsemen charging. Then, as another volley burst out, I saw Parfitt stagger. He clutched his side; the dying flames of the bus showed blood slowly coming from him.

But, astoundingly, it was just as if that wound had touched off some long-dormant power within him, as though mad forces long pent up had been released with that blood-letting. I was fascinated. An expression of fury such as I have never seen came into Parfitt's face, distorted in the wavering light of

the flames. He sprang into action. He faced the mob behind him, who were paralyzed by the gunfire and merely huddled there. He roared at them:

"They are shooting us. . . . Kill them! Kill the murderers! *À bas les assassins! Mort aux fratricides!*"

And he charged into the police, waving for the mob to follow. They did. They had found a leader. The mob-beast gnashed its teeth and charged with him. Parfitt hurled himself directly at the mounted police who were bearing down upon the rioters. He flung himself at the neck of a horse, arms and legs wide spread like a wrestler. His two hundred pounds of power rocked the horse, staggered it. His arms clasped the neck, and his feet entwined it in an effective scissors-hold. Horse and rider fell, crashed to the pavement. Parfitt seemed to be rubber. Never heeding the fall, not minding his wound nor the flailing hoofs of the horse, he wrenched himself free, and snatched the saber from the officer whose foot had caught under his floundering mount.

"*Allons, enfants de la patrie—*"

Parfitt's bass voice boomed out tremendously in a mad solo—the "Marseillaise." The crowds behind him caught it up. He charged, and they charged with him. I was running by this time—in the other direction . . . but I got one last glimpse of Parfitt—bloody, gleaming, his stolen saber flashing, his bull's voice roaring his chant. . . . There was another volley, and I saw Parfitt fall.

Then I broke away to the Crillon.

It is only true to say that I escaped death at that instant, for bullets pinged against the columns, and I saw scores of men and women fall and die.

WHEN I next saw Parfitt, it was forty-eight hours later—at the morgue. I was asked to identify his body. We carried a fine story of how a *Star-Telegram* reporter was killed in line of duty. . . . Corny Bull, still bandaged and suffering, wrote that story. He didn't mention the League of Nations complex. He didn't even tell the truth.

There is no reason why a fine man should not have all the tribute coming to him. Perhaps Parfitt was a poor misguided boy, but that seemed to be nobody's business then. We learned, in fact, that Parfitt had been born a Frenchman.

And—maybe he was a hero.

Another fine story by Fulton Grant will appear in an early issue.



KIOGA of the

Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon

The Story Thus Far:

THESE events, so amazing as to merit page-width headlines in newspapers all over the world, have been kept secret, awaiting verification. . . . They began a generation ago when Dr. Lincoln Rand set sail aboard the schooner *Cherokee* on a great-hearted errand as medical missionary to the primitive people of the Northwest coast. With him went his young wife Helena and his Indian friend Mokuyi.

Blown far out of her course by North Pacific gales, through the Bering Sea and into the unknown Arctic north of Siberia, the *Cherokee* was wrecked upon a wild and reef-girt coast—the shore, it proved, of the great hitherto unknown land of Nato'wa: a region warmed by uncharted ocean currents and by great volcanic fissures and hot springs; a land thickly wooded with evergreens of the sequoia family, and supporting many and varied wild animals. Stranger still was its human population: a people so like the American Indians in appearance, in language, in life and beliefs and customs,

that Dr. Rand soon came to the conclusion that here was the original birthplace of the Indian race.

Not long after the arrival of the castaways, the son of Lincoln Rand and Helena was born; but only a few weeks later the child's parents were both killed in a raid by hostile natives upon the Shoni tribe who had given them shelter. Thereupon the child was adopted by Mokuyi and cared for by his native wife Awena.

In this primitive life Kioga, or the Snow Hawk, as he was named, grew to a splendid manhood. From Mokuyi, and from books salvaged from another ship wrecked upon the coast, he learned to speak and write English; and from his wild comrades he acquired a wealth of forest lore. When Mokuyi was murdered by a Shoni secret society, Kioga avenged his death implacably. And his prowess in war and hunting at length made him war-chieftain of the tribe. When, however, another party of white people were wrecked upon the reefs of Nato'wa, fool-

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WILDERNESS

By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

ishly fired upon the natives and were about to be put to death, Kioga rescued them. And for that he was exiled from his adopted people.

Yearning to see the country of his fathers, Kioga aided this castaway yachting party—Beth La Salle, her brother Dan and her suitor Allan Kendle—to build a boat and escape. On the southward journey, Kendle grew suspicious of Beth's growing interest in Kioga, and contrived to have him left marooned on the ice when a whaler picked up the rest of the party.

The Snow Hawk survived all dangers, however, and made his way to San Francisco and thence to New York. But civilization proved too much for Kioga. Disgusted by its many hypocrisies and believing his love rejected by Beth, he left New York and set out overland through Canada and Alaska to make his way back to Nato'wa. And on the way he gathered a group of American Indians—people homesick for the free and simple life that was theirs before the white

man came—to take back with him to the land of their forefathers.

After many hardships and perils which took some toll of life among the older Indians of the party, at last they reached Nato'wa. But while Kioga was absent on a hunt for fresh meat, they were attacked by a Shoni war-party and either killed or made captive. . . . Kioga followed their trail to the village of the Shoni; then, after waylaying Raven's Tail the witch-doctor, stealing his costume and leaving him bound and helpless, the Snow Hawk boldly entered the town, determined to rescue his friends.

Meanwhile, Beth La Salle, her brother Dan and their friend the scientist Dr. Munro chartered the schooner *Narwhal* and set forth from San Francisco to overtake him. (*The story continues in detail:*)

KIOGA the Snow Hawk, disguised as Raven's Tail the sorcerer, went back through the village. He moved in the general direction of the prison lodge, wherein the boy Tokala, and his American Indian

fellows lay straining in their bonds and wondering in bated tones what their fate was to be, while the two guards squatted outside, grumbling at their ill-fortune in missing the opening of the Winter Festival. A bit of one guard's complaint reached the oncoming Snow Hawk's ear during an unexpected lull in the distant music.

"We watch. Others worship. Is it just?"

Came his fellow's answer grimly: "Think of that when the fires roast the prisoners' toes, warrior!" Then the speaker hissed suddenly for silence as the headdress of Raven's Tail came into view.

Calmly the newcomer squatted between the sentries, who did not venture to speak.

"The hour of the dance comes near," quoth Raven's Tail, "and for those who long endure, great gifts await."

The sentries eyed one another uncertainly as the shaman continued: "They give away the Snow Hawk's robes this moon. Each one will have the worth of fifty scalps. Ah, that I were but a younger man. Ah, that my bones were light again, as yours!"

The eyes of the sentries glittered with resentment and suppressed eagerness. "Of what use," muttered one, "is strength to us who sit and listen?"

"For five moons have I prepared," complained the other. "My muscles are like oak. To what end?"

Turning to Raven's Tail, the first sentry spoke again: "O sorcerer, tell us this: Shall we gain nothing of the contest dances?"

Added the other: "Is there no spell will hold the captives fast?"

Awhile the shaman seemed deep in thought. Then: "There is an incantation known to me. And yet—strange that I cannot now recall it!"

THE sentries exchanged knowing glances, undeceived by this old parry of the deceitful medicine-men, who set a price on every magic wrought.

"Would this fine blade its recollection aid?" asked one.

"And this broad beaded belt, *ahi*?" added the other.

The sentries saw the gleam of the eyes behind the mask, glancing at the bribes laid down by them before the supposed shaman. Then, as if possessed suddenly by a waiting spirit, Kioga leaped to his feet. "I hear a voice," he exclaimed,

"speaking in a strange tongue. It is the incantation. I will utter it before the prison lodge."

And in that strange tongue the Snow Hawk spoke to those within in English—utter gibberish to the listening sentries. What he had to say was quickly said. The effect upon the prisoners startled the two guards, watching their charges through the lodge door. Those who had sat erect slumped forward in their bonds as if in sleep. Several began to snore; whereat Raven's Tail, doubtless exhausted by this display of magic power, dropped again into a squat.

One of the sentries entered the lodge, kicking and prodding the prisoners with his foot. None moved. Stupor had evidently claimed them all. The voice of Raven's Tail came faintly: "It is done. They will not stir until the spell is broken. That none may break it, I will sit and watch."

Yet again the Indians exchanged glances, and reached some mutually satisfactory conclusion. A moment later they vanished toward the dance-ground, where soon the dancers would compete for the tribal rewards of endurance.

FOR perhaps half an hour the Snow Hawk sat immobile before the prison-lodge, to make sure that all village eyes were occupied with other scenes.

The stirring music of the Shoni was beginning, to which no man can harken and think of other things. Their link with the American Indian is established; but in their music, as perhaps in no other way, the tribes of Nato'wa have far surpassed their continental cousins. In all the known earth there is no such music as this, to one of whose many forms Kioga now listened with bated breath.

Faint on the still night air it came, in subdued yet thrilling pæans. Higher it rose, then faded into seven muted measures—the opening bars of the Hymn to the Sun, marking the beginning of the Shoni Winter Festival. Beneath it boomed the undertone of the speaking drums, timed to perfection with the deep basses of the Old Men's Society. In slow rhythmic measures it gathered volume as the elder tribesmen, from far assembled, gradually joined their voices in the prelude. Came then a pause, spaced with silence. Now began the round response of the female litany, interwoven with the rising surge of the warrior-accompaniment; followed by the

mid-organ tones of the children's orisons. Another pause, while the solemn monotonous incantations of the medicine-men picked up the ceaseless rhythm. And then—like a thunderclap, the full rolling swell of all the tribespeople burst echoing on the ear, surging through the forest aisles and along the misted waterways in majestic intonations. Seven times repeated it was, in ever-rising volume—the thrilling hosannas of the Shoni. Herein was something of the solemnity of the Roman high-mass, and of the drama of Wagnerian music, with the added quality of antiquity. For the Shoni religious music, as sung thus by all the people, is the voice of a race—a red race, which was old when ancient Egypt was an infant sprawling along the ageless Nile.

All in the village faced the south, where the worshiped sun had long since vanished. Even the sentries, gripped by the thundering majesty of the Hymn to the Sun, grew lax as the rituals proceeded according to the primitive liturgy of this little-known race. . . .

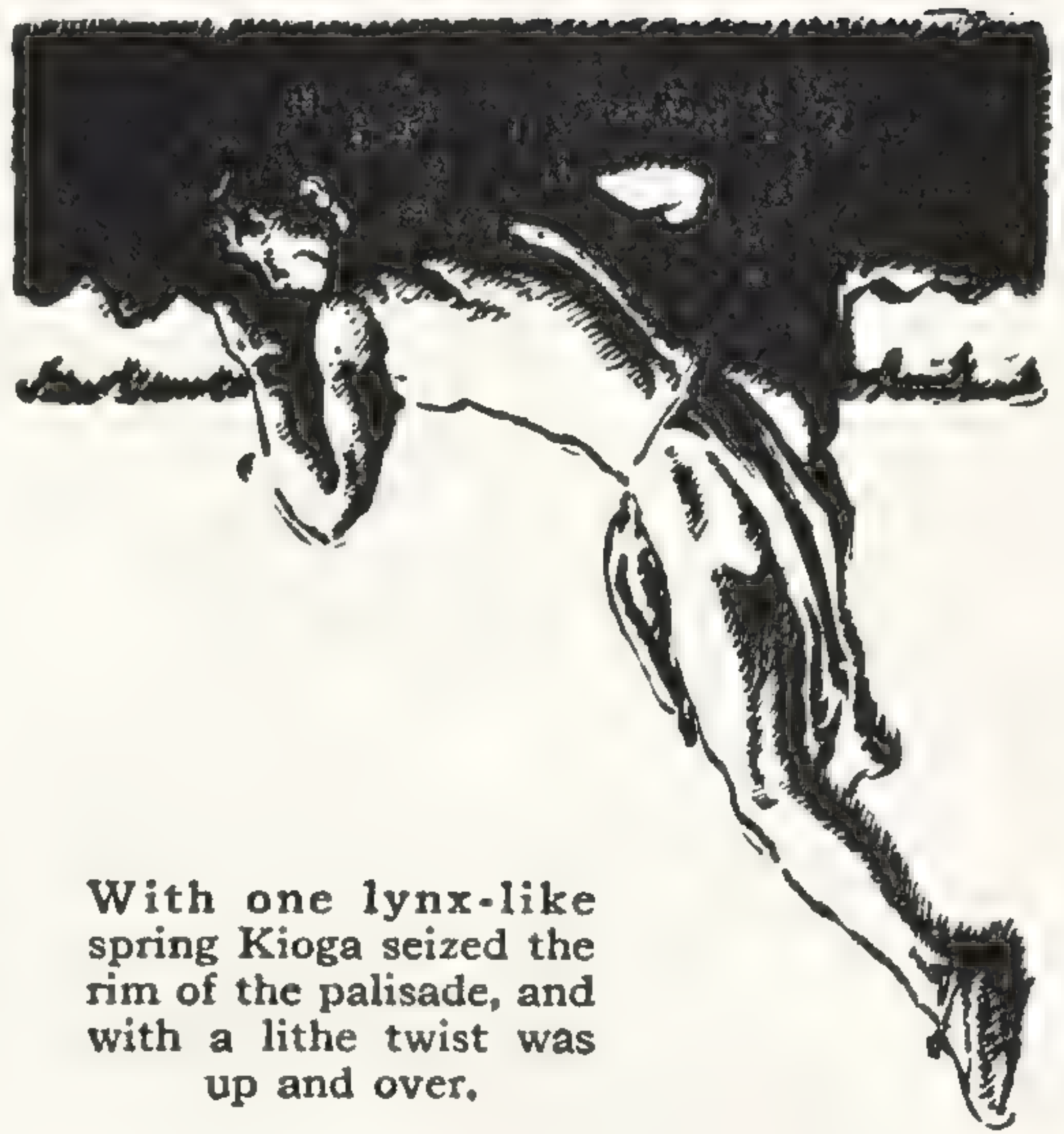
At length, persuaded that the prisoners were for the moment forgotten, Kioga rose abruptly and darted into the long-house, the village music muffled by the bark walls.

In the semi-darkness Tokala drew back as a slim knife played at his ankles and wrists. A moment later Kioga identified himself, pausing to hug the boy to him before whispering loud enough for all to hear:

"It is no time for greetings. Listen well, Tokala: I will prepare a canoe for your escape. Take this knife and release everybody. Let all rub arms and legs, that the blood may flow. If some one comes, lie quietly as before, as if asleep. If he grows suspicious, several attack and bind him tightly. But do not kill, for these are my people, among whom I have a few friends left." Then turning again to Tokala, Kioga spoke with a gravity fitting the occasion: "You are called the Fox, little brother. Be quick, then, and cunning; for much depends on you. Listen for my signal. When you hear it, if all is yet well, knock twice on the lodge-pole, thus—"

Wide-eyed and quivering with a sense of the importance of his assignment, Tokala proudly accepted the knife and as Kioga turned away, at once went to work, sawing at wrist and ankle bonds.

As the Snow Hawk reached the exit, the whispered voice of Grass Girl came



With one lynx-like spring Kioga seized the rim of the palisade, and with a lithe twist was up and over.

to him: "May the gods of our fathers accompany you!"

"And may the devil watch over Raven's Tail and keep him unconscious," muttered Kioga as he vanished quietly into the outer dark.

Into the nearest bark house he prowled, to feel with sensitive agile fingers for the weapons which would hang along the walls.

He emerged shortly, loaded with several bows, many arrows, a spear and a few round-headed clubs. Now the purple shadow of the palisade received him; and over it, one by one, he tossed his burden of weaponry. He paused to listen for any suspicious sound as his eye sought the top of the barrier towering twelve feet from the ground, a wall to hold in even an athletic man. With one quick lynx-like spring Kioga seized its rim, and with a lithe twist of waist and hip was up and over, to drop softly outside the palisade. The village sounds came muted now, through the log wall.

ALL depended on haste, but haste controlled by caution. One wrong move would throw the village into wild uproar. In that brief moment atop the palisade he had observed the sentries, intent upon ceremonies at the dancing arena.

Staking all on speed, the Snow Hawk slipped beneath and uplifted a great canoe from the sands. With a thwart resting upon his shoulders, and one eye ever upon the sentry lookouts near the gate, he moved it a few yards. Then he froze rigid, on perceiving that the sentry had risen to throw a glance toward the

river. He could see the man's plume flutter, and it seemed that his eyes had fixed that motionless craft. A moment later a second watcher rose by his side, to peer out.

IT seemed to Kioga that the pound of his heart was echoing thunderously in the hollow canoe, and must surely be heard. And when both sentries vanished suddenly, he was doubly certain that discovery was at hand. But the gate did not swing wide. The pulse of music continued unabated. . . . Again he moved onward, this time without interruption, dropping the canoe lightly to the water, throwing in paddles, springing in himself. He was quickly out of sight, and in a little time had concealed the craft under overhanging vines on the bank.

Back at the prison-lodge, Kioga heard Tokala's signal of safety responding to his call. Without a word he gestured to his band to come forth, and maintained watch while they filed silently in the direction of his pointing arm, merging with the obscurity there at the palisade.

Ten minutes later Kioga stood with his band at the canoe, giving directions as to the route they must take upriver, and distributing the stolen weapons among them.

"You will meet few Shoni canoes," he assured them. "Most of the war-boats are assembled here in Hopeka. But Wa-Kanek raiders—enemies of these Shoni—have lately been seen hereabouts, so it is reported. Beware of them also. Paddle north and west. You will come to a cleft in the cliffs. Wait there three days. If I do not come, go across the mountains to the plain called the Shedowa. There you will find horse-tribes such as your own American people once were."

From a birch near by Kioga stripped a section of bark, and with knife's point etched on its inner side a crude map, by means of which the band were to be guided. Then, taking farewell of them once again, he hastened back to the village, entering as he had left, secretly.

As Raven's Tail he prepared to seek the news and gossip of Hopeka, by means of which to shape his future conduct. As warrior-chieftain of the Shoni tribes he had once wielded a power second only to that of a ruling chief. How far he had destroyed the esteem in which once he had been held remained to be discovered.

Nearing the ceremonial grounds, he heard the music deepening. The hour of

psalmody and solemn invocation was past. Instrumental music had now replaced it. All the village walls threw back a strange and pleasing rhythm—not the primitive discords of monotony which passed for music among many of the American tribes, but a complicated score, played from memory, on instruments curious and varied.

Here a group of maidens sat, in their laps the lutelike *abalís*, whence at the pluck of slender fingers leaped chimes of soft guitar-like sound. There seven flageolets piped all as one, twisting their quiet notes into a rope of melody. A quick and birdlike warble spilled from twenty wooden flutes, answered by the reedy skirl from a dozen primitive pipes. Yet all of these were but the overtone for the two primary instruments of the Shoni people. One of these is a development of the drum, long, vari-chambered and yielding forty-three notes.

These notes the drummers now evoked in rich combination, by quick beats of skin-covered sticks after the manner of an xylophone; while other musicians played the Indian harps, whose nine strings of variable pitch are attached to turtle-shell resonators. From these the several players struck forth deep harmonious chords, pursuing the after-beat of the music with a hesitant mesmeric rhythm all their own.

Thus from primitive beginnings the Shoni are working toward that modern descendant born of a hunting bow and man's fertile imagination—the grand piano; and toward the organ too, whose first ancestor may have been a leg-bone whistle shrilled through the lips of prehistoric man.

CHAPTER XI

THE UNKNOWN VISITOR

WITH the quickening of the music's tempo, Kioga felt his sense of apprehension also quicken. Every moment brought nearer the ultimate discovery of the prisoners' escape and the possibility that Raven's Tail would recover his senses to interrupt this danger-spiced game the Snow Hawk played beneath the very knives of his enemies.

Yet he must learn more of the trend of politics among the tribes—if not as Raven's Tail, in whose guise he had walked so securely, then by risking appearing as a simple warrior, trusting in the darkness to aid in his disguise.



A tall young woman was approaching in the throng. Her name—Heladi—sprang to the Snow Hawk's lips, but went unuttered as closer she came.

His eye cast round for one whom he might relieve of a suitable blanket and appropriate warrior's finery. A feast-lodge stood near by. Into it a minor village witch-doctor was stalking in warrior's garb. Ten steps took Kioga to the door and in, the bear-skin falling softly into place behind him.

The shaman felt along the bark wall for a pipe, not hearing the silent foot-fall at his back. As he turned, a gasp of surprise was audible—not more. Fingers sinewed as with wire closed upon his neck. A moment he struggled

with his attacker, but his resistance was as nothing to the muscles of the Snow Hawk.

Ringed ever closer by the danger of discovery, Kioga worked with lightning speed, gagging and securely binding his captive with rawhide thongs snatched from a wall-peg. Then he substituted the man's blanket for that belonging to Raven's Tail, donned the other's headband and prepared to quit the lodge.

Suddenly he was possessed by the spirit of deviltry. He would reopen his old feud with the medicine-men with an

appropriate prelude. In a moment he had propped the bound captive erect against a lodge-pole and tied him fast. About the man he flung Raven's Tail's robe, its mystic markings well to the fore. Upon the captive's brow he placed the gaudy headgear, and across the eyes tied the hideous medicine-mask. He ran a spear between arm and body, pointing front, and on a last inspiration, stuck the pipe in one side of the mouth.

AN instant for pausing to grin appreciatively at his handiwork—then he entered the street again, whereon were scattered many people moving toward the dance-arena. But no one now avoided him, as with blanket drawn up about his eyes, the color of which alone might have betrayed him, he joined the throng.

Near by a witch-doctor dealt a brutal blow to a child that thoughtlessly ran across his path. A warrior on Kioga's left eyed the shaman with ill-disguised anger, but kept his peace. To this warrior Kioga addressed his words.

"It was not thus," he muttered tentatively, "when Kioga was war-chief here."

The man started. "*Ahi!* You knew him, then?" he asked.

"Quite well."

The warrior leveled a quick glance at Kioga.

"I also. He was very brave," he declared.

"As to that, opinion differs," answered his companion. "The shamans liked him not."

The voice of the warrior dropped guardedly. "The shamans! They care for none but those who do their will. They control everything. 'Tis even said,"—his voice was still lower,—"that the Long Knives have formed again."

"*Ahi!* That is news!" ejaculated the Snow Hawk, startled. When he had gone away a year or more before, the power of this secret organization had been virtually dead. Many of its members had fallen to Kioga's own avenging hand—his answer to their plotting and brutal murder of both his Indian parents. Single-handed he had all but crushed the society, which was organized for treachery and the overthrow of government. Yet, taking advantage of his absence, from its remainder, like some diabolical djinn, it had sprung back into existence.

But the warrior was speaking again. "How news?" he asked in some surprise. "Where have you been, that you knew not of these things?"

"In a strange country, among strange tribes far to the south," answered Kioga not untruthfully, ere pursuing his original theme: "But where are those who were loyal to Kioga?"

"There are other ways of dying than in battle," was the significant reply. "Many have drunk their death. Others have been found with an arrow in the back."

"What of Kias, once called Kias the Deaf—who fought beside the Snow Hawk in the battle of the Painted Cliffs?"

The warrior reflected. "Many moons ago Kias went away with a war-party. More than that I know not, though some say—" Here his voice paused, his gaze resting suspiciously on a figure near by.

Half turning, Kioga saw a fierce and arrogant personage decked in the gaudy vestments of a shaman. The hands which clutched the figured cloak about him were scarred with self-inflicted unhealed knife-cuts. His face was a living horror, its upper lip cut quite away in some boyhood knife-brawl, exposing all the upper teeth. His uncombed hair hung lank and uncouthly about the broad but bony shoulders.

As the Snow Hawk watched, the man moved slowly away.

"They hear and see everything. Even the earth has ears," muttered Kioga's companion, following the witch-doctor with his gaze.

"Who was he?" inquired the Snow Hawk. "I thought I knew them all, but here is one who is strange to me."

"He is called Shingas the Half-mouth. Old Uktena spoke against him in the Council. Two days later Uktena died. Some say his son Kias also died that way, since he was not here to mourn Uktena. You may remember Mokuyi and Awena, kin of the war-chief Kioga."

"Well do I remember them," said the Snow Hawk softly.

"They were murdered," continued the other. "'Tis Half-mouth's boast that he had a hand in that too. —Why do you jump, warrior? Did a wasp sting you?" he remarked half jokingly.

"The wasp of memory," Kioga agreed quietly, controlling that sudden access of hatred which had tightened every muscle in him at the words of his informant. "The killer of Uktena and of those unhappy dead has gained a foe in me."

FOR the first time the other sought to see beneath Kioga's paint and his muffling robe. "Who are you, warrior?" he demanded suddenly.

"If I reveal it, will you guard my name?" asked Kioga.

"By my hope of a warrior's death," the brave assured him.

Pausing where a fire's light might briefly shine on his face, Kioga lowered the blanket.

IN but the short instant, then, that his companion looked upon his features, all jocularity fled. Narrowed grew his eyes as Kioga's own engaged them. He sucked in a startled breath, then fell back a pace in his astonishment, and essayed to speak. "It cannot be—and yet—it is—"

"Your promise! We are watched!" Kioga reminded him; and as the man composed himself and corrected all but his sudden paleness: "Tell me, warrior. How many feel as you? How many loyal would rally to the old call, if I uttered it here, now, upon this crowded street?"

Bitterly the warrior made answer. "Not twenty tomahawks would flash at the Snow Hawk's signal. A year ago he deprived the Shoni of captives. He left his tribe ungoverned and without farewell. Before that all loved him. After—" He shook his head regretfully. "The medicine-men keep memory of those offenses alive, and make them look greater."

"They were great enough," conceded Kioga unhappily. "But what's done will not undo." Pausing, he offered his hand to the warrior, who wrung it without a word. "Tell no man that I was here," he admonished. Then drawing his robe closer about him, he struck quickly off by a side lane through the village.

As he approached the arms-lodge, wherein were kept spare weapons of all kinds for use in any emergency, the odor of cooking meat reached the Snow Hawk's nostrils. A brief investigation revealed a spitted haunch of venison slowly roasting and dripping its sizzling flaring fat into a bed of red embers before a neighboring lodge. He paused, cut himself a liberal slice in the absence of his unknown hostess. Of some corn-cakes set out to cool, he took several. From a woven basket he scooped up a fistful of dried plums, then went on, munching as he went.

And in the shadow of another lodge an old woman crouched concealed with her hand clapped to her mouth in mingled wonder, fear and gladness. A little girl-child close in her arms would have spoken, but the old woman hissed an

admonition. "Silence! If these old eyes do not play tricks it was—*ai!* may the Great Ones Above grant it was—Kioga the merciful. The Snow Hawk is back! The house of Seskawa is honored. He has eaten of our food."

Kioga emerged from the arms-lodge with a stout bow and several arrows. At the dance-ground to which he next returned, he paused to watch the naked dancers, their skins glistening like wet copper, their muscles writhing as they flung themselves through the arduous measures of their dance, to the incessant, maddening beat of the tom-toms.

Turning away, Kioga was about to avail himself of every last moment in which to test village sentiment toward himself. But as he moved against the crowds which came toward the dance-arena, he suddenly checked. A tall young native woman was approaching in the throng. At sight of her his heart leaped with pleasure, relief, and something more perhaps, for she was passing beautiful.

Her hair was black as blackest ebony, worn in the double-looped coiffure identifying her as of the Wacipi, for whose women's favor men of many tribes go courting. Round each dark twisted braid a beaded deerskin band was bound, redly gleaming in the firelight.

Across one shoulder hung a bird-skin robe, no smoother than the taut young breast it partly covered. Her arms were ivory, braceleted with burnished copper; her feet warm-shod in doe-skin moccasins, quill-worked in rectilinear designs. She wore her garments as a mountain wears a morning mist, lightly. She moved with the grace of a savage leopardess, all suppleness and undulance.

HER name—Heladi—sprang to the Snow Hawk's lips, but went unuttered. In one slim hand she bore a fan of priceless feathers, his gift to her more than a year ago. In one ear-lobe there glowed a burning ruby in a setting of ancient workmanship. That had come from his own store of treasure, found long ago buried on the seashore sands and locked now in the darkness of his hidden cave, which had been sanctuary for him in other days.

Closer she came, clothed also in reserve, eyes proudly looking straight ahead, until she was not three arrows distant. Fearful of betraying himself, Kioga drew back.

Men were not wont to draw away from her. The sudden movement caught the

Swift raged the battle back toward the torture-post, about Kioga.



young girl's eye. Her proud glance turned upon the tall and stately warrior close before her. A second it seemed that he would pass unrecognized, and then—in full stride she halted. He heard the startled catch of her indrawn breath, saw the dark pupils of her eyes dilate with wonder, joy and amazement, as the color drained from out her lovely face. Her lips had shaped to utter some greeting, when suddenly she stiffened. As swiftly as it fled, her self-control was back. With upraised fan she hid her features from the curious round about and went along her way, albeit a little uncertainly, like one who rocks beneath some heavy blow.

As she passed, a harsh and furious cry came from near the village gate, near which a wildly gesticulating figure, struggling in their grasp, harangued the guardians of the gate, laying curses upon their ancestors and unborn children.

With a last glance after Heladi, Kioga drew near, harkening to the man's furious words, before clearly seeing him.

"Fools! Fools! Fools!" shouted the newcomer, beside himself with fury. "Do you not know who I am?"

"You are an impostor," replied one of the guards. "Raven's Tail entered here these many hours ago."

"H'yah! There was the impostor!" screamed the true Raven's Tail.

"You lie," declared the other guard scornfully. "Did he not predict that prisoners would be taken? Did not the prediction come true? Do they not now await the fires, in the prison-lodge?"

Almost as if in answer a discordant bedlam rose in the direction of the prison-lodge. Some one was voicing the discovery that the prisoners had made their escape.

Came then a voice from among the warriors crowding near the gate.



"Raven's Tail guards the feast-lodge. Look and you will find him there!"

As one, twenty braves leaped to verify the words. Their leader rushed into the feast-lodge, but drew back at the prick of the spear held by the tied-up captive. His shout and those of his followers brought the contest dances to a sudden end. New voices swelled the clamor.

Emerging from the feast-lodge came the braves, supporting between them a figure still garbed in the terrific robes and mask and headdress which had always made Raven's Tail conspicuous.

"Did I not tell you?" demanded the gate guard triumphantly, dealing the unhappy Raven's Tail an extra buffet.

"Seize him!" shrieked the luckless shaman at the top of his lungs, pointing to the wearer of his sacred vestments.

By now the village was in completest uproar. And the confusion was unresolved until tall Shingas the Half-mouth pushed

his way through the crowding villagers, to peer first at Raven's Tail, then at his accuser.

Waiting upon his judgment as to identities, the noise quieted a little. Whereupon Shingas proclaimed in his near-gibberish that Raven's Tail was indeed Raven's Tail, a fact whereat the guardians of the gate trembled in their blankets. For their offense was double in that they had admitted admitting an impostor and thereafter subjected the true Raven's Tail to gross indignities!

In another moment the crafty Shingas, leaping from event to event made an admission seldom heard from members of his primitive cloth. "We are all fools, deceived by an impostor. Bar the gates! Search the village! Strip every warrior of his robes!"

His exhortations came just too late. That same voice which had earlier spoken from the throng was raised anew.

"Stand we here while the prisoners all escape? Let us give chase, and search the rivers north and south for them!"

The four culpable guards—two from the prison-lodge, two from the gate—were all too eager to be gone, that they might escape respectively the wrath of their chiefs and the wrath of Raven's Tail. Fifty others besides—impetuous would-be young warriors, eager for honors—followed the guards out to the canoe-racks on the sand. On the instant two long-boats forged northward and two lesser craft cruised oppositely.

In one of the latter, the Snow Hawk rode in the stern position.

This craft skirted the shore in cautiously rounding a bend, passing into the darker shadows there. When it emerged, the stern position was vacant. Kioga had transferred himself apeline from canoe to overhanging limb, and thence ashore, making his northeasterly way through the gloom of the forest primeval along the beaten game-trails.

FOR perhaps half an hour he traveled without incident other than an occasional brush with some minor prowler of the forest. It was his intention to visit the cave which had been his haven during all the years of his boyhood outlawry.

He was following silently along the Hiwasi River. On either bank the undergrowth defied human progress. But Kioga's passage was not so easily barred: light as a gibbon, he swung actively along by the strength of hand and wrist beneath the river overhang.

He might have climbed higher into the midway a hundred feet aloft, where none could view his going; but the wash of a war-canoe had caught his eye some distance ahead. He would determine who the warriors in it were, and whither they went, and if among them there were those whom he might call allies.

Swift forged the long-boat north upon the river, propelled by the brawn of many arms. But when Kioga chose to hasten, none but the swiftest craft might hope to keep him in its wake. In fleet agility he overhauled the canoe as if it were at anchor and concealed himself where it must skirt the shore, the better to view the occupants.

But none were there on whom he could rely. They were searchers all, from Hopeka, doubtless seeking traces of the vanished prisoners.

Intent upon the warrior-laden canoe, Kioga did not see a little figure limping

wearily along in the direction of Hopeka on this side of the river. But of a sudden the foremost paddler hissed. As one man the others held their birch blades deep. He who had signaled snatched up his ready bow, snapped a shaft against the waiting cord and took aim.

For the first time Kioga glimpsed the figure at whom the arrow pointed; it was Tokala, little deserter from the Indian band, footsore and exhausted, but doggedly seeking a way through the tangle to be at the side of Kioga his idol. And upon Tokala's heart a cruel-barbed arrow was trained.

Whether the man's intent was to loose or merely cover the boy with his aim, Kioga did not pause to ask. As a jaguar springs from green concealment, in one great bound the Snow Hawk leaped upon the warrior and bore him under, capsizing the war-craft by the fierce impetus of his pounce.

A moment, while the startled Shoni braves floundered in the icy river; then swift the action, loud the yells of excitement as they closed with the long-sought Snow Hawk, like wolves about an encircled tiger. While it endured, this was a Titan's struggle that Tokala witnessed, fought out waist-deep in the cold Hiwasi.

Empty-handed, Kioga struck at his armed assailants, lightning blows that rained down wherever an opening showed itself, and felled a man with almost every blow. Twice and again the warriors' clubs glanced from his shoulders, and five men lay helpless from his swift assault. Then—it was over.

A well-aimed swinging club brought the Snow Hawk stunned, to his knees. Upon him fell many hands, binding him fast with cords from the hunting-bows.

A wild triumphant yell announced the thrilling tidings of Kioga's capture. Others of the Indian party seized Tokala, exempted now from further peril by the overshadowing reality of the famous Snow Hawk's downfall.

Pausing only to revive their injured companions, the warriors were soon forging downstream again.

CHAPTER XII

THE HONORS OF THE STAKE

ALONE in her lodge the Shoni maid Heladi sat—she who had known and loved the Snow Hawk, and seen him vanish from her ken in the company of strange white-skins many moons ago.

Though Heladi had long mourned him as forever gone, the memory of him had remained with her. And now today the unbelievable had happened. She had looked into eyes whose glint she would never have mistaken for another's. The Snow Hawk had come back! To her?

A thousand questions clamored in her mind for answers. Why was he returned? Who were the captives whose release he had undoubtedly engineered? Where was Kioga at this moment? He had surely known her. Would he return? When—

A clamor at the village gate caught her ear. She left the lodge again, not without assuring herself that her woman's knife reposed in its sheath at her back.

Now rose such a shout as made the forest echo. With beating heart Heladi turned in that direction, pushed her way through the crowded warriors. A path was made for her, for she was a high-born, the daughter of a ruling Wacipi chief, and the Wacipi are the most advanced of all the seven Shoni tribes.

HELADI'S heart turned cold within her at what she then saw. It was the Snow Hawk, assuredly enough—all covered with drying blood and dragged along unresisting by several warriors—a dead man, from his appearance. Behind him came the boy Tokala, struggling impotently in the grip of a grinning brave who grasped him by the hair, half dragging, half carrying him.

Death had this young girl seen a thousand times when the war-men came home from battle bearing their slain. But never had she thought to see the Snow Hawk thus. She sought to draw closer, but in the surging throng, many of whom followed the warriors bearing Kioga to the prison-lodge, that was almost impossible, even for Heladi.

Her glance therefore turned after the boy Tokala. She saw him at last, still furiously struggling to gain the side of his idol. The young men had formed a rough circle about him and were making sport of him, tossing Tokala repeatedly back when he sought to squirm through their legs or break from the ring.

Again and again the desperate child flung himself at the cordon of sinewy brown arms. He bled from the nostrils. An ugly blue bruise had raised below one eye, bumped by an Indian's elbow. Suddenly his grim persistence was rewarded. Snake-wise he managed to writhe under a brave's arm and darted from among his baiters. But then his strength, already

sorely tried, ran from him. His knees trembled with near-exhaustion. In one direction hostile laughter greeted him. In another a medicine-man raised a threatening tomahawk. Behind him the persecutors were in pursuit.

But before him, with eyes all aflame with indignation stood a young woman—beautiful in her feather robe. And so, because there was no place else to turn, Tokala laid aside his boyish pride and stumbled toward Heladi. He heard her broken incoherent words of pity as she dropped on one knee to receive him. His stoicism was breaking fast. Through vexing but unrestrainable tears he dimly saw her outspread robe, glimpsed the ivory paleness of her skin and flung himself against her with an impact which made Heladi gasp. The next he knew, his arms were round her slender waist, his cheek against her heart, whereon he sobbed unrestrainedly now. But none save Heladi would ever know, for the warm covering of her robe concealed him from other eyes.

Her words to the boy's tormentors came swiftly, like the bitterest juices of sarcasm and irony from acrid fruit:

"Brave warriors! Mighty hunters! Ten eagles against an unfledged nestling! How many enemy scalps you must have taken to win the right to bait a child! Who is so brave will seize him now from Heladi?" With flashing eye the girl defied them; and seeing that none answered her, and that some looked at the ground in embarrassment: "Back to your dancing and boasting!" she mocked on. "Tell the chiefs and people that ten hunters ringed one deer and could not hold him! Sing the praises of this small unknown. The hour has brought you little else to boast about!"

Then, touching the dark head of Tokala, she spoke in tones that none who heard might misinterpret: "I take him as my brother. Hereafter hurt him at your peril."

IN such manner came Tokala the Fox to be adopted into the Seven Kindred Tribes of the Shoni Nation. His erstwhile tormentors went away crestfallen. And because they were not mean at heart, but only savagely impetuous, many of them did indeed sing the praises of the deer who had broken through the hunters' ring.

In the lodge of Menewa, Heladi bathed Tokala's hurts. She gave him to eat and drink—of corn-cake, spread with fresh

wild honey, and of nourishing venison-broth, and the tender breast of a mountain pheasant. And when at last the weary boy fell asleep with his head in her lap, she laid him upon her own low couch of soft new panther-skins. She covered him well and went out into the village, moving toward the prison-lodge wherein Kioga was slowly regaining consciousness.

He had little hope of succor. Aware that on the morrow he would likely be put to the torture, he resigned himself to death; and having resigned himself, sought to rest in preparation for the ordeal to come.

FOR a time there was a silence; then Kioga heard voices outside, one a woman's. A figure lifted the skin and entered, wrapped in the shadow of the prison lodge. The smell of sweet-herbs mingled with the delicate pleasant scent of one he well knew identified her to Kioga. He whispered to her softly, in the Shoni "intimate" dialect.

"Heladi! How come you here?"

A hiss of surprise escaped the shadow at his side. "Oh, eyes that see in the dark," came her murmured reply. "The guards were changing. I came as if to bring you water. I am not recognized as Heladi, who once sang of love to the Snow Hawk." Mockery, cruel and biting, now filled her murmuring voice. "What did the white-faced woman do, that you return to us? Would the white-face have brought you—this?"

Kioga felt the cold touch of a copper knife, but did not reply.

"Tomorrow the stakes will bear thee," said the girl. "Does the Snow Hawk feel no fear?"

"I dread but thy taunts, Heladi," answered Kioga. "For the rest—I do not fear to die."

"My taunts?" wondered the girl dully. Then with quickening words, recalling the white girl she had seen Kioga with: "Ah, yes! When the fires come to your eyes and your hair lifts in flames, then my voice will rise above the rest."

"But sing my death-chant, O north-land song-bird, and I will die with glory," returned Kioga, parrying her every mockery with a softness born of a deep affection and regard for her.

Fiercely she began anew: "Will you not ask for the knife? Will you rather take the flame, the piercing spear, the smell of thy roasting flesh? Say but one word, and I give thee a quicker death."

"No, Heladi. Upon the stake I will hang and in the fires burn. I will die at the hands of my own people, with honor. Not like a coward in the night by the gentle thrust of a woman's knife. My thanks, Heladi. But leave me now, that I may rest and face my hour with courage."

A choked sound came from the girl, and her rounded arms slipped about his neck, holding his head a moment against her breast, as she said brokenly: "My heart is ice. But have I waited all these moons—to see thee burn? *Ai-i!*"

Her little cry of horror and yearning broke suddenly off as a footfall sounded without. Quick deft movements of her sharp knife cut the bonds at his wrists and knees, releasing the torturing constriction of the long thongs. Swift fingers slipped away the bonds, and as a feathered head was thrust into the lodge, she melted into the shadows of one corner.

IT was the guard, come to play at cat-and-mouse with the blood-caked prisoner. He bent jeeringly above Kioga, kicked him in the injured side and drew his knife threateningly.

But of a sudden his brutal chuckle was cut short as a lithe form flew at his throat. A gasp, twice repeated, echoed in the confinement of the barken walls. Came then a hoarse low cry, thick with the bubble of air through fresh blood and filled with the horror of the death rattle—then a heavy impact as the guard's head struck the floor, its feathers brushing Kioga's face. An instant Heladi stood with eyes blazing down on the fallen man, like a tiger mother who had defended her own; then she knelt again.

A few moments since, she had been a woman fired by love. Now she was a young girl chilled by horror and awe of what her knife had wrought—but untouched by fear. For a space the Snow Hawk's arms were about her comfortingly, and there she would gladly have remained, though discovery and death found her thus. But Kioga's admiring words awakened her to the reality of their danger.

"*Ahi!* Sister of the lightning! It was a noble blow! How still he lies!"

She shrank a little from looking at the dead guard. "The gate is open," she said. "Within the hour they will come for you. I can do no more. May the warriors' god watch over thee."

"What of Tokala?" he asked her.

"I have taken him."

Quick as thought came Kioga's reply: "What of thee, Heladi?"

"What of me?" she returned on a quiet note. "I am turned traitress. It will be known, for Child's Hand saw me coming here. All will turn their heads from me. But I do not wish to live. I will walk into a tiger's mouth." And with a lithe movement she drew away from him as if to go. But he caught her hand, turned it up, and pressed his lips against the cushioned palm. She quivered, at that, then snatched her hand away. There was a rustle. He called her name softly, twice. But Heladi was gone.

The path to liberty was clear. In ten leaps he could be at the palisade, over and away, as free as that owl hooting derisively from beyond the log wall!

But in that moment his exultation was checked by what the girl had said of discovery by the shaman, Child's Hand. That she might dare perform her threat of self-destruction, he felt certain, knowing the steely nerve of these Wacipi women. Yet knowing also the medicine-men, he knew too that worse might befall her.

She had freed him. If he escaped, it would be at cost of her replacing him for the torture. All her father's power might not save her from that. . . . He leaped for the door, a plan in his mind. He must escape; not only his own life was at stake, but the safety of the American Indians whom he had brought to Nato'wa was in his keeping. And Heladi should accompany him, at any cost.

But it proved too late. He heard many voices—village warriors announcing that they had come for him. Another time he would have made a break for liberty, but he dared not now, lest he be slain before the lips of Child's Hand were stopped. Perhaps some other way would yet offer itself. He returned and sat down beside the dead man. . . .

A warrior's head protruded through the doorway, then drew back with a swift yell of warning. In a moment ten warriors reinforced the man as he tore aside the skin, revealing the interior to the others in the light of his torch.

Calm as a graven image, Kioga sat at ease, cross-legged upon the earth. Beside him, inert in death, lay his guard. The bonds which had enwrapped him on their departure lay at his feet.

The Snow Hawk's voice, weighted with stinging contempt, struck at them:

"Come, women! I offer no resistance. Is the stake driven? Is the fire kindled? Why do the warriors wait? Do eleven

His annoyers fled, leaving Tokala the Fox alone on the field of action, proud and defiant.



armed men fear the wolf whose teeth have been drawn?"

Yet another minute hesitation held them, as if they feared that he might yet by another miracle, escape. Then, as one, they closed with a rush, seized, raised, and pinioned him anew, and led him toward the ceremonial circle.

Kioga's eyes went to the moon's reddish disk, half-risen above the southern peaks and swollen to bulging immensity. When black sky showed between it and the mountain tops, his ordeal would begin. Only then, according to Shoni belief, can the worshiped body obtain view of the ceremonies by which a life is sacrificed to it.

UPROAR announced Kioga's approach. In the too-brief interval remaining, he prepared to die as he had lived, violently. . . . The moon rose higher. The drums quickened, and the singing grew louder, fiercer, shot through and through with savagery, as the warriors danced ever closer, brandishing their knives. As Kioga watched, all of the moon became visible, and presently a thin line of sky appeared beneath it.

Simultaneously he felt a sharp prick. A drop of blood ran down his arm, from a crease cut in it by a knife. The torture had begun; the Snow Hawk steeled himself.

Next he felt his hand seized from behind. Some lever was introduced under the nail, pulling it apart from the raw quick. Into the bleeding flesh a thorn was thrust; and so, one after another, with all of his ten fingers.

Jeered a shaman, piercing the flesh of Kioga's arm with a pointed stick:

"What will the Council say when I tell them who slew your guard? *Hai!* A true arrow that, to make the brave Kioga flinch!"

Laughing in wicked triumph, Child's Hand made way for others.

The Snow Hawk's eyes swept the village. Here were they he once had ruled, now clamoring for his scalp, egged on by his enemies the Long Knives, led by certain of the witch-doctors. Yet there were friends among them; a familiar face came before him. He knew this new tormentor to be Brave Elk—he who had defied him when he masqueraded as Raven's Tail.

"You too?" he asked the man a little reproachfully.

Dimly amid the din of shouting and singing, he heard the man's words, uttered as he bent near, playing a tomahawk about Kioga's face: "Thirty braves wait my signal to rally at your side."

"You are well named, warrior," returned Kioga with suddenly gleaming eyes. "But thirty would die instead of one. It is folly. I will endure yet awhile. There are two things, however, I would ask of Brave Elk."

"Only ask, and they are yours," returned the loyal warrior.

"Kill for me the shaman Child's Hand," snapped Kioga.

"It shall be done. What else?"

"Your tomahawk—and swiftly—should they put out my eyes," said Kioga. The warrior drew back in something like horror. The Snow Hawk's gaze held him commandingly.

"It shall be done," repeated the man. A masked figure, a village witch-doctor, shouldered him aside, brandishing a copper instrument, flattened at its end, which he thrust into a pot of reddish embers. While it heated, he fixed the Snow Hawk's lids back with a devilish contrivance which hooked into either brow and held up the eyelid.

NOW he stirred the embers and withdrew the glowing copper rod; and grinning evilly, had brought it up before Kioga's face, when of a sudden the Snow Hawk brought his last full strength to bear in one mighty effort to burst his bonds. And seeing some of the cords breaking asunder like threads, the cowardly shaman drew back.

Then from one side Shingas the Half-mouth came to his assistance, aiming

a heavy blow with a war-hammer. Had it landed squarely, Kioga must have been a corpse in his cords. But in his haste Shingas swung too far back. The hammer struck between the torture-pole and Kioga's spine, at the neck.

With the weapon's fall, it was as if Kioga lost consciousness—yet not entirely so, for though the sight of his torturers seemed to melt suddenly from his view, as a curious numbness crept along his head and neck, oddly enough he could hear all that transpired round about him. The poignant agony of those thorns embedded in his fingers' quick was undiminished. Nor did he lose the power of other perceptions. And what he heard a moment later seemed the fantasy of delirium.

For at a sudden wild yell, Half-mouth sprang back in quick alarm: The brave beside him was tearing at an arrow quivering between his ribs, his eyes rolling, the muscles of his face working terribly beneath its paint as he fell.

INSTANTLY Shingas' gaze flew to the village gate, where he saw that which struck terror into his craven's soul: Two sinewy figures had dropped from the palisade top, had struck down the surprised sentries, whose eyes had been fixed on the torture, and had thrown wide the ponderous barrier to the inrush of a horde of yelling naked fiends.

Long lulled by that sense of security over their enemies which had been born after Kioga's great victory, the Shoni had for some time neglected to maintain their old system of scouts and outposts, and had left themselves open to their old raider-foes the Wa-Kanek, from the vast plain west of Nato'wa's coastal forests.

But something of a surprise also awaited the Wa-Kanek, in the presence here of so large a force of armed men. And the Shoni reaction was swift. Already the two Wa-Kanek warriors who had thrown the gate open were martyrs to their boldness. One, transfixed by a Shoni spear, hung pinned to the palisade, writhing in agony above his fellow, who at his feet, resembled more a porcupine than a man, because of the arrows that protruded from him.

The swift hissing shafts of the villagers cut into the irregular ranks of the invaders, as from every point of cover they raked them. Already the gate was choked with fallen, beyond all closing against the remaining horde, which trampled on its dead in gaining ingress.

Swift raged the battle back toward the torture-post, which it passed and enveloped. With clubs and tomahawks, knives and spears, the Wa-Kanek warrior-fanatics rushed in, covered by a whistling barrage of fire-arrows and flint-head shafts from their rear. With like weaponry the Shoni fought back.

Already here and there the incendiary bolts of the enemy had fired a bark lodge, from which the frightened occupants scattered screaming. All about Kioga the battle raged hottest. In his ears was the thud of club meeting yielding flesh and bone, the fiendish yells of savage embattled men, merciless and blood-thirsty, who asked nor gave quarter. A hard-hurled tomahawk struck an inch from his ear in the torture-post—a strayed throw. In the heat of fury two savage adversaries fought it out to the death almost against him, unwittingly injuring the Snow Hawk even as they slashed one another. And then some secret friend had the forethought to remove the hooks swiftly from Kioga's eyelids, and to slash his remaining bonds.

He slipped lower within them, until he was on his knees, all but helpless, victim of the numbness and restricted circulation caused by the tight-drawn cords.

Yet though he heard and felt the bloody progress of events, no single detail did the Snow Hawk see. That darkness, somehow associated with the numbness in his neck and upper spine, was with him still. And presently on receiving a glancing blow from a club aimed elsewhere, he sank into darkest oblivion.

THE battle stormed on, passing him. And due to the unexpected numbers of Shoni war-men assembled for the Winter Festival, it was not the slaughter the Wa-Kanek had contemplated. The village lines held; the Wa-Kanek forces wavered; and because it is the nature of Indian warriors to retreat if the end be not quickly achieved, the raiders then withdrew, smashing many Shoni canoes as they left, to take counsel of chiefs and medicine-men somewhere on the rivers.

Fearing some trap, the Shoni pursued no farther than the river-bank, though their invectives, insults and arrows followed the retreating enemy until these were out of hearing and arrow-range.

Returning then, the Shoni gathered their dead and the dead of the Wa-Kanek raiders, which lay thickest about the torture-stake. A hasty separation of the two was then made, against the expected

moment when the Wa-Kanek would return to the assault. As is their custom, the Shoni loaded the enemy dead in several long-boats; and accompanied by a shaman, pushed off down-river. Not until the craft were well away did the villagers discover that in their haste they had permitted the body of Kioga to go with the others.

ARRIVED at what is known variously as the Cauldrons of the Yei, the Haunted Whirlpool, or the Unti-Guhi, the shaman began the superstitious rites which mark the donation of human bodies to the river-gods. . . . It may have been the cold water playing about a dangling wrist which brought the Snow Hawk back to consciousness. But whatever it was, the cracked monotonous drone of the shaman's voice was the first thing he heard as his faculties began to serve him. He opened his eyes, but the same utter darkness was still with him. He saw nothing.

Some moments passed before he fathomed the astounding fact that he was a dead man, among other dead men, his soul being prepared for sacrifice to the river, even as his body had been preparing for sacrifice to the fires. The droning voice ceased. Kioga heard the splash of bodies being pitched into the flood. For the first time he tensed his muscles secretly, and found them responsive, though every movement gave him pain.

Now, closer by, he heard other sounds—the sickening rip of hair from skull as according to custom the shaman incised and tore away scalp after scalp from the dead who had not been already scalped by individual conquerors—communal trophies of the tribe. The man was working just beside him. He, Kioga, would be next.

At this same moment one of the canoe-men called a name to which the knife-wielder answered. That name was Child's Hand, the shaman who had seen Heladi enter the prison-lodge in her attempt to free Kioga—Child's Hand, the sole possessor of the girl's deadly secret.

Kioga felt the man's clawlike hand at his brow, straining the skin taut that the blade might better do its work. He heard Child's Hand utter a sudden subdued exclamation of astonishment at this piece of good fortune—to secure the Snow Hawk's hair, which would be a priceless relic if only the entire skull went with it. The Snow Hawk felt his hair re-

leased and his chin forced back. In a moment would come a quick slash, and— But Kioga did not wait for that.

Like the head of a Nato'wan viper, the Snow Hawk's waiting hand darted forth, the fingers clenching into the shaman's cordy neck. One quick, eel-like writhe, and Kioga had flung himself into the river. A moment the resisting shaman gripped the canoe's gunwale, playing havoc with the craft's trim. Then, overbalancing to the drag of that mighty arm fastened at his throat, he went down kicking and squirming, to disappear beneath the troubled surface, as silently as any body he himself had ever consigned to the waters.

Came then a shout from the stern paddler. "*H'yah!* The polehook! Child's Hand has fallen into the river!"

But though they watched, the shaman did not reappear. Somewhere beneath the water Kioga was seizing the shaman's scalping knife and plunging it into the man's own heart. Then releasing the dead man, he struggled with his remaining strength to attain the surface. The rushing currents had already swept him swiftly beyond view of the red canoe-men, and for a moment he faced the likelihood of being caught into the maelstrom of the Cauldrons.

Then a cross-current snatched at him, and upon a rocky ridge he was hurled with a force which drove the little breath out of his lungs. There he clung, fighting with every ounce of his little remaining strength to make good his hold, to hang on, that he might live.

GIVEN an inkling of what the next long months would bring, perhaps the Snow Hawk would have strained less eagerly; perhaps he would have preferred the swift oblivion of drowning to that which he must yet endure. Fortunately, though many lay claim to prevision, few men are gifted with it. The Snow Hawk, having regained a little strength, painfully dragged himself ashore. Listening to be sure none of the Shoni were in pursuit, he chafed his cold and stiffening limbs until the blood flowed. Then rising in his nakedness, he who had been so sure of foot stumbled toward the thickets, groping his way from tree to tree until well concealed from possible view on the river side.

How dark the forest seemed this night! How cunningly the ground-vines caught at his uncertain feet! Branches seemed reaching from nowhere to strike

him in the head. But still he groped onward, following as best he could the southward trail, away from Hopeka.

A strong scent came to him suddenly. T'yone the wolf was straight down-wind. So close was he, that Kioga caught the beast's snarl. His foot was on a stone. Picking it up, he hurled it in the direction of his old enemy, and heard it strike, with a thud—heard T'yone's retreat and knew the animal must have been exactly where he had looked. And yet—why had he not glimpsed the yellow fire of the wolf's eyes?

WITH a dread suspicion which he scarce dared harbor, he sought a certain animal-trail known to him, which would lead him to a cliff-ledge wherefrom he could put his growing apprehension to the test. A half-hour of uncertain climbing brought him to the well-known spot, where oft he had lingered to watch the moon's slow rise. He reached forth, found the familiar cleft wherein to secure his feet. Unmistakably this was the place. The air was clear and cold—his nose and skin told him that. The moon had risen before he hung upon the torture-stake, and would be flooding the valley with a silver glow; yet he saw it not. He passed a hand slowly back and forth across his face, shook his head and tried again—but in vain. He rubbed his eyes, felt them very gently with his finger-tips, and all seemed well, save that the brows were tender where the shaman's torture-hooks had pierced them.

Then, near by, he heard a winter-bird give liquid voice, as only it does when the moon is in the full. And that, perhaps, was when the Snow Hawk realized the stunning truth.

No more for him the swift wild dash down the mountain-side. Never again the lightning pounce upon the unsuspecting deer. No glimpse from this day onward of a leopard's spots, the Northern Lights, the sun reflected in a deep blue pool, a woman's smile.

Hitherto lightning's incarnation, henceforward he was of those who are brothers of slowness, who carry staffs and feel their way along. He who had been the soaring hawk was now the earthbound mole, destined to burrow unseeing on his tortuous way. He would walk that circle of darkness in which the sightless move. And in the end he would be a heap of bones in some man-eater's den.

For long the Snow Hawk crouched on the ground, meeting such a situation as

A wild yell echoed along the river as Kias' men took the ambushers suddenly from the rear. . . . The last foeman fought savagely near the edge of the high rocks above.



few have been called upon to face. At last, descending tortoise-like from his high pausing-place, he groped for and broke for himself a long slender stick wherewith to feel his way.

MORNING, marked but by an hour's flush in the southern sky, found him still unseeing as he picked his way toward the so-called Tsus-Gina-i—the Ghost Country of the Shoni. Somewhere in those unplumbed depths the Snow Hawk's lair was hid. Could he but attain that refuge, he would be safe so long as he could obtain food and drink.

But even with the thought the grim laws of survival were coming into play. A gaunt panther, who at another time would have given Kioga a wide path or lived to rue it, paused before the Snow Hawk with lolling tongue and polished fangs adrip. On detecting Tagu, the Snow Hawk flattened against a tree, a snarl upon his clean-cut lips, as he instinctively fell back on savage bluff to keep the panther at a distance. It was successful—this time. But though with that snarl Kioga had warned Tagu away, there were others who by some dark instinct came to an awareness of the Snow Hawk's plight. Of these Pack-skull the Grim and his voluble brother-crows were a few. From them others learned of it, and in turn broadcast their knowledge. For so it is in that world where the law of fang and claw is the only law. Know you not with what subtle cunning the wolves wait on a sick and ailing bull, and how the meat-birds draw unto a living thing, with prescience of its end? When, before, would a raven have dared to sit croaking at Kioga's very elbow as one did during his every pause on the way to his cave, while others wheeled heavily about over his head, wondering if they too dared?

Already the pangs of hunger assailed Kioga. Of what use now the fine primeval adjustment of those fox-keen nostrils? Scent the prey he did—a deer near by. Stalking, he heard it move away. He heard it snapping a twig, sprang at the sound with sudden hunger tearing at his vitals. He crashed into a thicket of devil's-club from which he picked himself up bleeding anew, and much wiser as to his present limitations.

The pain in his swollen fingers was agonizing. With his teeth he had drawn out the torturing barbs; now he held his inflamed hands in the water of a brook to cool. Such slivers as still skewered

his flesh here and there, he then drew forth.

For several hours he made his slow way along, judging his course as best he could from memory, and listening intently for the sound of a waterfall, which at last he heard and was able to locate himself after a fashion. Unless he erred, a stream flowed a little way north of here, which eventually passed through country little known even to the Indians. Once within those confines,—whose every trail and stream and cave Kioga knew with the intimacy of an entire boyhood spent there,—he would at least be able to move with greater familiarity, and far less risk.

But he was not there—yet. And on the still forest air there came to his ears a long howl with a note of sadness which but made it the more terrible. In the middle of its utterance he heard that which sent him rushing on, heedless now of the blows he sustained from branch and stone and unexpected fall—a sudden bubble of sound in the interrupted howl—then the siren-like, triumphant, up-rushing rocket of grim music, bursting at its apex into a dozen yapping notes. It was the signal "*Come to meat!*" by which Kioga knew his trail was found.

HE was confused by the apparent hopelessness of his situation. But only for a moment did he run; then his old cunning reasserted itself. Never by headlong flight could he deceive these slant-eyed pursuers. If best them he did, it would be by wit and wile superior to their own. If his sight was gone, his woodcraft at least remained.

Pausing in his tracks, he worked grimly, quickly and stoically with his sharp knife. Waiting the few moments he dared wait, he then continued on, slower and more haltingly than before. He heard the heedless crash of brush that betokens a pack rushing hot on the blood-trail, and the whines of famished eagerness with which the wolves quartered the spot he had so lately quitted. Soft as might be now, he moved toward the water. Echoed up the short deep yelps of bafflement, heard but rarely from the pack in force, just as the Snow Hawk felt against his face a cold clean breeze off water.

The howling rose in volume as the wolves vented their full discomfiture.

Kioga moved across the sand, feeling with his stick for what he sought—a log thrown by the spring freshets high upon the bank. At a likely-seeming log he

paused, bent, assured himself that its weight was not beyond his reduced powers. After a moment, marshaling his strength, he dragged it toward water, pushed it into the quick current and threw himself upon it.

The rattle of clawed feet sounded behind him on the sands, followed by the snoring growls of the panting killers as the prey floated to midstream. There Kioga was safe. The Nato'wan wolves, like their distant relatives the white wolves, take to deep-running water only in a life-or-death extremity.

The Snow Hawk was safe for another reason: he had confounded T'yone's gang with the very thing it sought, his rich red blood, a great pool of which he had let from his own veins, temporarily blunting their capacity for further scenting—and it is primarily by scent that wolves run down the prey.

A pint of blood—a high price for one in his condition to pay for the moment's respite in which Kioga had accomplished his escape. But with that price he had bought life itself, which surely had been forfeit had he taken measures less extreme. Calculated in those terms, the purchase cost was not so great, thought Kioga as the great round log bore him from the danger-zone down-river into the trackless Ghost-country. When the log grounded at last, he knew he had gone as far as this stream could take him, for at this point that particular stream separates in a hundred directions, losing its identity in a gloomy swamp.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CIRCLE OF DARKNESS

TO one less amazingly endowed with keenness in his other senses, Kioga's situation must have seemed hopeless indeed. Yet it had come to him, as he felt his way along, that he need not despair. His passage from the river along familiar ground was eventless, though managed at but a fraction of his normal racing pace. At the base of the cliff he found without difficulty the old narrow trail he had climbed up or down thousands of times. And halfway up the cliff's face, his seeking fingers encountered the stout door of interlacing branches, plastered with river clay, which long ago he had erected to bar out wind and storm.

Another moment to manipulate the cunning latch with which he had equipped it; then the door of sanctuary

swung inward. The quick ear of the Snow Hawk caught the faint murmur of running water—the spring which bubbled in the depths of his comfortable haven. Stepping in, his cold bare feet sank ankle-deep in the soft rich skins which covered the stone floor. He passed onward, to slake a raging thirst at his private spring. Then, cold, hungry and utterly exhausted, he flung himself down, rolled up in the thick-furred skin of a great tiger and fell asleep.

AFTER a few hours, however, the pain of his wounds awoke him, and he rose shivering. Here and there he groped about the spacious lightless enclosure, his fingers informing him that all was inviolate. Spears, bows and tomahawks hung upon the wall. There were several whips of various lengths; ropes hung in neat coils, and in one corner stood a sort of three-pronged grapnel-like object, little larger and much less cumbersome than a club, to which he would later return.

There were other things he would have lingered over, but he was cold. In his rude stone fireplace there remained the charcoal and dry sticks of a dead fire. Just beside it he found a handful of loose bark, his firebow and its spindle, which later he adjusted into the notch of its tinder-block. Taking a lap round the spindle with the bow's braided thong, a few quick strokes sent a wisp of wood-smoke up to his nostrils.

He pressed the fluffy bark against the kernel of ember his drill had generated and gently blew until he heard the crackle of a little flame. Upon this he cast a handful of dry sticks, which igniting, formed the basis for his fire. He quickly built it up to roaring dimensions, piling on billets from the immense store in his cave, and comforted himself in the warmth of his blaze.

His next thought was of food. Moving a few steps, he reached into a woven basket to find therein some pieces of old dried meat. Of this he ate sparingly—for he knew not where the next meal was coming from. There should be two large baskets, he recalled, groping about. Ah! Here was one, filled with kernels of dried corn. Enough, he estimated from memory, to last him several weeks.

But a sudden scurrying sound disillusioned him of that, and when he set the basket down, several families of wood-mice scattered about. The squirrels had got into his other basket and

finished off its store of acorns. Scarce a handful remained of what had once been at least a bushel. These were serious blows, but with hunger partially satisfied by the dried meat and partially disregarded, Hawk turned to other things.

HIS hands passed over the stone anvil whereupon he had beaten many an iron or copper head for his weapons. He paused, upon touching a thick bear-skin which covered a trunk-sized chest, bound with rusted and broken iron bands. Throwing aside the skin, he raised the creaking cover, and plunged his hands elbow-deep into an assortment of fiery gems, large, small and of a hundred shapes and varieties.

He could not see the chatoyant glitter and sparkle of this priceless hoard, nor enjoy the cold radiance of the small halo which arched above the open chest. These things are for the eye alone. But he could remember that exciting day, years since, when he had dug this treasure from a sunken hulk long buried in the coastal sands.

His hands now went to a rock shelf high on the wall. Carefully he took down book after familiar book. From these well-worn tomes, salvaged in his boyhood from a wrecked steamship, he had educated himself as best he might—building on what his Indian foster-father had taught him of speaking, reading and writing the English tongue, with a bit of charcoal for chalk, and the inside of a barken lodge for blackboard. His touch played about corners and backs slowly, but without opening the books. Of what use to look within them now?

From the wall he took down a length of rawhide rope, plaited by his own hand in the so-called four-braid, of which he unlaied a length of a few feet. With his knife he then cut off the several lengths of leather and made them into slip-nooses. Arming himself with a war-tomahawk, and covering his nakedness with fresh moccasins, *azain* and warm Indian hunting-shirt, he set forth into the forest again, climbing down the steep path he had utilized in coming up.

Over certain well-beaten animal-trails he pulled down tall and springy saplings. To these he affixed his snares, tying the resisting treelets down by means of cords and twig triggers so delicately adjusted as to send the snare jerking upward at a slight touch. Five of these, in various places, formed his trapline, which he left, returning to his cave only after he had

notched each sapling with the tomahawk for identification later.

For several hours he labored at the creation of a digging implement of iron, for an even more ambitious plan had entered his mind: He proposed to dig a pit, and mayhap at one stroke of fortune take a month's supply of real meat!

But that, thought the Snow Hawk, was a problem for the morrow. Tonight he would visit his trap-line, which he did. One snare dangled empty. A second and third were unsprung. A fourth, operating at his own touch, jerked his hand into air with startling force. He reset the sprung snares before going further.

But in the fifth cord he found a reward. A fine plump hare, victim of sudden neck-breaking death, hung limply.

Kioga dined that night in royal style, all things considered; and banking his fire for the term of his rest, rolled into his good furs and slept the clock around.

Waking rested, he finished off the remainder of the hare and gave thought to his proposed pit. Faring forth, he felt the soft gigantic snowflakes of winter on his cheek. With his mind occupied by new problems, he gave little further thought to his blindness. In a day, two days—a week, doubtless his sight would return; for were not his eyes open and whole—apparently quite uninjured?

Though his lost sight had been one of the most important of his faculties, infinitely valuable, every other faculty remained intact. To these in his extremity, he appealed.

King of his remaining faculties was the wonderful subtleness of his smell-sense, wherewith, by moving into the wind, he could detect and evade part of the dangers lurking everywhere about him. His hearing was of the most exact acuteness. For such a savage as he, the very air was alive with wireless messages of scent and sound. Moreover, through much of the arctic year Noto-wan forests are wrapped in semi- or total darkness. His early life had been spent roaming constantly about in these glooms. Therefore he was no stranger to that little-known faculty that has been described as sense-of-obstacles.

SO, as he now went about, it was with the aid of no new ability that he instinctively dodged things in the path. Indeed in this forest, with all its obstacles, he was safer than on a desert or plain, where there is naught to reflect sound to the sightless one.

At a likely spot Kioga paused and attacked the frozen earth with his crude iron pick. In an hour his labors had advanced to a point where a pit six feet long and several deep yawned open. The end of the day found him laying thin branches and rubble across the deepened pit, which the falling snow rapidly concealed. Then he turned caveward. At his snares two more hares awaited. Resetting them, he continued on, to spend the next few hours repairing an old fish-net. This he later took to a stream near by, stretched it across a channel, weighted its lower cords and departed, new ice among the inshore willows tinkling elfinly, like musical glass, as he trod on it.

NEXT day, hampered by the depth of snow, he approached his game-pit with bated breath and keen ears. At a series of repeated snorts and savage batterings as of horns against earth, he unslung his bow, held two arrows in his hand and a third against the string and advanced. An intentionally broken tree-marker informed him that the pit was but ten feet ahead. Even as he listened again, the captive in the pit began a new thrashing of horns, tossing clods of earth and sticks into Kioga's face.

A change in the breeze brought him the thrilling scent of living venison. Here was meat to satisfy every demand of the most ravenous. His pit had taken its first toll!

He snatched back the string and loosed an arrow straight down into the hole. He heard the unmistakable sound as it sliced into the beast's body. With the remaining arrows likewise deep-imbedded, he heard the creature's struggles presently cease. Waiting until certain the end had come, he lowered himself carefully, passing his hands over the new kill.

Its size exceeded his fondest hopes. It was a fine buck, weighing all of two hundred pounds, the antlers perfect, the hair coat smooth and still warm. With as little exertion as one might employ to raise a house-cat, Kioga lifted the heavy animal out of the pit. One deft slit down the belly allowed the abdominal contents to roll out. Repairing the disturbance to the pit, he then re-covered it, in hopes of another victim in the near future. Shouldering the meat, he went home. . . .

Flushed with his triumph over the problems of blindness, which he had thus far met and solved, Kioga had returned to his cave and borne his fresh kill within. Feeling for the door in order to close



A breeze brought the scent of venison. His pit had taken its first toll. . . . He loosed an arrow straight into the hole.

it, he heard a sudden blast of wind rip past the entrance of the cave. The suction caught at the great barrier and crashed it shut. In closing, its bar caught the Snow Hawk a terrific knock-out blow on the side of his head. He went down like a riven tree, knew a moment of complete unconsciousness. Then he awoke to a fresh awareness of that grim and painful reality of his affliction which comes to all the newly blind.

He would hereafter be the sport of his own carelessness, prey to the slightest moment of forgetfulness. He learned these tragic inferiorities of his state at costly price. His accident laid him up for two long days, during which it seemed that his temples must burst with pain. And though he grimly rejoiced in his temporary triumph over the terrific dangers of his position, his heart was torn with anxiety for those dear to him. What of Heladi—and Tokala? What had befallen Grass Girl and the other Indians whom he had brought from the security of America into this wild land?

CHAPTER XIV

THE AMBUSCADE

BACK at Hopeka village, immediately on the repulse of the Wa-Kanek raiders, Heladi was one of the first at the scene of Kioga's earlier ordeal.

Already the wounded had been borne to one part of the village, where the women were administering curative herbs and applying soothing poultices to their wounds, while the shamans chanted magic songs over them, to aid in the cure. Among these Heladi moved rapidly, pausing but an instant before each to assure

herself it was not he whom she sought. With mounting dread she turned toward the silent rows of the dead. But of all the horrid death-masks Heladi looked upon, none bore the faintest resemblance to the Snow Hawk.

As she stood bewildered, it dawned upon her, when two of the returning long-boats discharged their warriors, that some of the enemy dead had already been taken out on the river. And walking purposely past a group of those who had manned the death-craft, she overheard snatches of their talk about the peculiar fate which had overtaken the shaman Child's Hand.

Had it been any other than he who bore the dangerous knowledge of her presence at the captive Kioga's side, she would have passed off the shaman's death as accident, or as another treachery of which the village had heard so much of late. But with Heladi, the wish was parent to the thought that Kioga might have had a hand in this. Uncertain and fearful, she turned toward her lodge.

ONE night a week later, paddling silently into view of Hopeka, with a contingent of twenty brawny braves, came one of fierce and haughty mien, who was secretly feared by the shamans and marked for eventual quiet disposal by the Long-knife society's plotters.

This was Kias, lifelong friend of the Snow Hawk, and one of the very few remaining alive who had dared to defy the shamans in open council. Kias it was whose father Uktena had paid the death-penalty for a like offense. And Kias wore this day a deer-skin blanket, blackened in memory of his father who had died so strangely, with suspicion pointing to foul play.

That excitement greeted Kias' coming is certain. The news traveled swiftly, particularly in those quarters frequented by the Long-knife society's membership. Timed less providentially, the arrival of Kias and his band might have occasioned the society less concern. But at an hour when the shamans had all but established themselves masters of the Seven Tribes, the advent of opposition, particularly in one so skilled in the Indian arts of rhetoric and eloquence as the quick-tongued Kias, was an unhappy visitation.

In his turn Kias had instantly observed the general excitement. Quick to inquire into this, he learned the amazing truth—that his friend and former superior the Snow Hawk had indeed returned. To

one who owed his tribal position and his very life to Kioga, this was startling information, the more so since Brave Elk, his present informant, attested it. It was also Brave Elk who was able to tell him of events preceding Kioga's own capture, including the adoption, by Heladi, of the boy Tokala. At mention of this Kias turned to Brave Elk quickly.

"Heladi—daughter of the Wacipi chief—is it she of whom you speak?"

"Even so," replied the other. "She cares for the boy who came with Kioga."

"It may be, then, that they will tell us more of this," said Kias thoughtfully. But he was too shrewd to seek out Heladi directly and involve her in the far-flung web of the Long-knife espionage system. He called instead at a neighboring lodge, headquarters of a band of bachelor warriors who called themselves the Arrow-makers. Here for a while he tarried, to break a long fast and ponder how he might talk with the girl secretly. . . .

In the interim the welcome news of his coming reached the Wacipi maid. Here, she knew, was a bold and trustworthy spirit, known to be sympathetic toward his former master, scornful of any suggestion that he disavow allegiance to the Snow Hawk. Cautioning Tokala to remain indoors, it was Heladi who sought out Kias, to acquaint him with all the recent happenings and enlist his aid.

Unsuccessful everywhere else in her search, she turned at last toward the fire-lit bazaar, located near the bachelors' lodge. Despite the recent excitement and the sacred ceremonies of the season, trade must go on. For the Shoni, unlike most American Indian tribes, had developed a regular system of barter and exchange.

ARTICLES strange and picturesque adorned the rude stalls erected for display of various wares. From deep in the farthest reaches of the peak-country came these magnificent glazed earthenware specimens of red, yellow and blue pottery. Copper ornaments and combs of bone and metal lay among chains and glossy disks of the reddish metal. There were necklaces of animal-claws for trade, and polished pendants on leathern thongs, and labrets for those who wore them, and earrings and quill skewers with which to pierce ears or nose. There were dried pigments for war and ceremony, powdered in little wooden bowls. There were whole skins, worked in colored quill designs, ready for conversion into apparel,

and great squares of native woven stuff of split reeds, made to shed water from the wikiup. Moccasins of many varieties, shell-beaded, lay about; elsewhere were shown flints for arrow-heads, and little pressure-tools of bone for chipping flint; carved bone whistles, small musical instruments; cups and spoons of mountain-goat horn heated, shaped and polished; piles of hardy dried fruits from the far mountain confines heaped up on shallow baskets, themselves valuable for their water-holding closeness of weave.

And on racks behind the stalls, adjusted so as to catch the eye, the most beautiful and priceless of all Shoni handiwork—the feather robes—were displayed. They hung there in all their iridescent splendor, their folds filled with highlights and areas of gleam, like rarest Oriental rugs. Of these, many were as much as ten feet square, yet so light a child might carry several and scarce feel their weight.

Such were the Shoni bazaars, filled with dark-skinned children stuffing themselves with the free maple-sugar dispensed liberally by the toothless old hags presiding over the stalls.

IT was here that Heladi came upon Kias, and approached him with a haste which drew attention from certain watchful eyes whose observation had been better avoided.

“Kias,” came her greeting, “the hour has been doubly long seeking you.”

“Heladi!” he answered her, as he shot a few quick glances round about to see if they were observed. “Know you not that I am always watched and spied upon? You peril yourself coming to me openly.”

“Since when has a daughter of the Wacipi feared danger?” she demanded a little haughtily. “Have you had the news of Kioga?”

“In part,” was the reply. “But tell me what you know else.”

And so, in the shadows of the bazaar she told him, filling in many interstices in the structure of his information. When she had done, “And the shaman Child’s Hand—returned he no more to the village?” asked Kias.

Heladi shook her head; whereupon Kias grinned suddenly. “But for that,” he asserted, “I should agree that Kioga is dead. But there is something in the shaman’s end that rings of the old days, before the Snow Hawk was made chief. Do not give up hope.”

Meanwhile, left to his own devices in the lodge, Tokala the Fox wandered restlessly about. And it was not long before he ventured to peep out at the lodge door.

THE village was full of scenes at which the lad’s little Indian heart beat the quicker—men of war stalking about, heralds moving with messages from lodge to lodge. As he watched, a strange and interesting figure moved past—a village magician known as Walks-Laughing, a harmless sort of creature to whom few paid attention. Scarce had the curious creature meandered past, mumbling, than Tokala was following on his heels, dodging from lodge to lodge, hiding whenever Walks-Laughing turned. In this manner both spanned half the village, the magician gaining no more attention than usual, Tokala passing for one of the village children.

Attracting lukewarm notice where some young men had congregated, Walks-Laughing finally paused, reached into his skin-wrapped bundle, produced several stones and began to juggle them swiftly from hand to hand. He proceeded next to devour the stones, which seemed to multiply as rapidly as he swallowed them.

To the matter-of-fact Tokala, who was busy keeping count,—which he lost at the seventy-sixth swallow,—this was surpassing wonderful. Wide-eyed and open-mouthed, he hung back waiting excitedly for the magician to burst.

Others, however, less naïvely gullible, were loudly laughing at the display. Among these were several children Tokala’s age, but wiser in the ways of the village, one of whom chanced to see the little stranger intent upon the magician. Now, among little red-skinned roughnecks, just as elsewhere in the children’s world, there are always those who delight in pursuing and tormenting a stranger from another part of town.

Before Tokala realized it, he found himself confronted by a lad some years older and a head taller than himself—evidently the gang-leader and local bully. Behind him stood a score of children of various ages.

The taller lad reached forth, seized Tokala’s nose and twisted it cruelly. Tears of anger and pain sprang into the Fox’s eyes. At that moment, from the direction of the bazaars came Heladi’s lithe figure. Beside her, intent upon her serious words, a tall warrior strode beneath his blanket. The Fox saw Heladi suddenly check, pointing, and saw the

warrior's eyes raise. They were witness to his second disgrace!

Suddenly something in Tokala snapped; with every ounce of his limited strength he lashed out. His little fist sank into the solar-plexus of the bully, whose jaw dropped as he gasped for breath, sank to his knees and lay *hors-de-combat*.

No less astounded was Tokala, ringed round by his lesser annoyers. But the Fox recovered more quickly than they, and fell tooth and nail upon the nearest. Triumph filled him with fighting fury. Not all the village children would have been a match for him then. A moment's resistance, then they fled, leaving Tokala the Fox supreme in his mastery, standing alone on the field of action.

Aware that this time, at any rate, he had naught to be shamefaced about, he held his head high. Seeing him standing proud and defiant, one of Kias' mettle could not but be instantly taken with a keen liking for the Fox.

Heladi addressed Kias.

"He is called Fox," she said. "Kioga brought him here."

"Rather call him Wolf, for his courage," answered Kias as his hand went round the boy's shoulder. "The friends of Kioga are the brothers of Kias."

Tokala caught the gist, if not the entire substance of that, and as they moved on, he strutted along erect and with a great show of indifference to the gaze of his recent persecutors. At the lodge of Menewa, Kias prepared to take his leave.

"What will you do?" Heladi asked him as he bade her good-by. Kias was thoughtfully silent a moment. Then:

"I and my men will go downstream—on a hunt, that we may add meat to the village store. You understand?"

"Yes," said the girl quietly. "And may you find him you go hunting."

SOME hours later, armed for the hunt, Kias and a number of trusted braves congregated about a spot where their canoe lay beached undergoing a minor repair. They were observed of several observers. For one thing, the guardians of the gate watched them, with mild interest. More intent by far than these, however, were a pair of glittering eyes that from the face of the shaman Half-mouth focused upon the band, cold with hatred, suspicion and fear.

Word had reached Half-mouth, via the primitive grapevine system of his own invention, of two things; the peculiar death of Child's Hand was one:

the other concerned the unwelcome arrival of Kias, whose appointment as a kind of roving ambassador to the Seven Tribes,—made by Kioga and ratified by the Council,—had long been a thorn in the shaman's side.

To a companion at his side he addressed a few quick words. The man nodded, and accompanied by two others standing near, set out, well armed and carrying several quivers of arrows, to attend to a small matter of blood-letting. They did not leave by the main gate, but by an auxiliary and little-used exit which Shingas barred behind them.

YET another pair of eyes, and these the brightest and quickest of all, witnessed the preparations of Kias and his men. Also, by lucky chance, these same eager orbs, watching from a vantage-point in the south wall, fell upon the silent shadows that were Shingas and his cohorts, prior to the recent separation.

Now Tokala was a child, a mere boy not yet eleven years of age, ignorant of the motives which move men to murder, and totally unaware of these primitive politics. But he needed no guile to make him realize that the secret departure of Shingas' armed men boded ill for Kias.

A little time ago Tokala had almost regretted stealing away from Heladi's lodge. Now he felt more than justified; instead of climbing back to the ground within the wall, he hung down by both arms outside, shut his eyes and let go.

Tokala was not, remember, such a boy as the Snow Hawk had been, all rawhide and rubber and coils of springy steel, but a recent invalid by no means possessed of his fullest powers of strength and endurance. He fell the twelve feet with a jar that hurt his ankles cruelly. After a moment, biting back the pain, he limped softly along the palisade, always in its shadow. At a point where the forest threw an even denser shade, he parted from the village and attained the near bank of the Hiwasi River, where it turns southward after passing Hopeka village. On a sandy spit, covered with sheltering brush, he crouched, awaiting the coming of Kias and his band.

Presently the fast long-boat, laden with its silent red men, came forging by. Rising to hiss sharply, Tokala saw in dismay the warriors lay aside their paddles, seize their bows and train the sharp arrows on his position. Nevertheless he dared to hiss again. The canoe came slowly inshore, broadside on.

Tokala rose and called Kias' name.

At once the leader of the band struck down the weapons of his fellows nearest him, and springing knee-deep into the icy stream, met the boy halfway with the query: "What do you out here, Tokala?"

In halting Shoni words the Fox told all he had seen and overheard of the plot to destroy Kias and the band, and also of the place named for the killing. Turning this over in his mind, Kias then signaled the canoe nearer, lifted Tokala aboard and gave the order to paddle into the shadow of the overhang, where he laid his plans to outwit Half-mouth's assassins.

At first he was of no mind to permit Tokala to remain, owing to the risks to be run. But so insistent were the boy's entreaties that Kias finally gave way on condition he keep well hidden behind his own war-shield at the moment of meeting. To which Tokala eagerly agreed. Kias now divided his men. A third of them took to the forest and stole forward to the place named by Tokala as the point of likely ambushade. The canoe, after allowing them time to reach that point, continued on.

Never, perhaps, did a heart beat swifter than Tokala's as the craft approached the danger-zone. Already the overhanging cliff, sharply watched by Kias and his men, was looming into view, fully visible in the floodlight of a brilliant moon.

Slowly the long-boat crept nearer, keeping to the concealment of the overhang. When within fifty yards Kias gave a signal. Shooting forth into mid-channel to take advantage of the swift-ening current, the warriors bent to their blades. Fast as an arrow the craft fled between the rocky walls, rounding a bend in full view of the place of peril.

So swift was their pace and so sudden their appearance that the ambushers were taken unawares. An instant later two huge boulders, precariously poised on the bank above, toppled into the stream. A split-second sooner, and the canoe had been smashed in, but now the mighty splashes merely broke over the stern.

THEN a wild long-drawn yell from above echoed along the river as Kias' men took the ambushers suddenly from the rear. Two of Half-mouth's allies hurled to destruction in the waters below the cliffs. To make doubly sure of them,

the canoe-men pumped their bodies full of their waiting arrows.

The third and last foeman fought savagely and to the bitter end near the edge of the rocks high above. Forced to the very lip of the gorge, he finally turned and with a despairing shriek flung himself far out, as if seeking to crush the canoe below with the impact of his own body. A covey of arrows flew forth, of which half a dozen found him in mid-air, and he fell twisting and turning, dead before he struck the rocks.

Thus ended the first open engagement in what was to be one of the grimmest struggles for supremacy in all Shoni history. And not by the wildest stretch of his imagination could Kias have divined who were destined to be his strongest allies in this lengthy mutiny.

PICKING up his successful scouts, Kias continued on his way, arriving finally at the point where enemy dead were commonly thrown into the river. At this spot the Indian band quartered every inch of bank on either side, searching minutely by torchlight for the hoped-for evidence that Kioga might have survived to make his escape from the charnel-boats. Soon that hope dimmed, for at the point where Kioga had actually escaped the currents, every possible trace of his passage was washed away.

At the very last it was not Kias, nor any of his practiced trackers, who came upon a trace of Kioga, but little Tokala himself. Bending suddenly, he picked up something from the grass and rose with a little cry of triumph, flourishing an object he remembered well indeed.

It was the only trinket Kioga had withheld from the handful he had given Kamotok the Eskimo—a copper circlet which had belonged to Awena, his Indian foster mother, in the long ago. But it was enough. With renewed efforts the band finally found a trail—an erratic, uncertain, meandering trail, ending upon the sandy bank of a stream some distance from the Hiwasi. The clawed tracks of wolves had all but obliterated the man's traces. From the age of the several marks Kias drew the conclusion that Kioga must have fallen to—or only just evaded—the ravenous pack. And from this point they failed utterly to pick up the trail again, and perforce they gave up the attempt.

The blinded Snow Hawk fights on for life in the wilderness of Nato'wa while Munro and his party brave the reefs of the coast to make a landfall. . . . These and many other exciting events are graphically described in the next installment.



The eternal battle of men against the sea, and of woman against the curse of Eve, will make this story by the distinguished author of "Home Is the Sailor" long remembered.

By **BILL ADAMS**

Illustrated in dry-point by Yngve Edward Soderberg

The Wastrel

USUALLY a skipper to whom a man applies for a berth sizes him up, looks at his discharge-papers, and says either yes or no. But when I went aboard Captain Patton's ship and asked if he wanted a mate, he stared at me through and through. Something nervous about him, it seemed. Who'd want to sign with a nervous skipper? But it wasn't a matter of what I wanted. I had to have a berth, and berths were scarce. So I let him stare; and in a minute came a question that took me all aback. "Are you married?" he asked. Who ever heard of a skipper asking a prospective mate such a thing? None of his business!

"No, sir," said I. And at once he said, "I want a family man." So off I went to seek a ship elsewhere.

At the end of a week with no luck, I chanced to pass Patton's ship again. I wasn't thinking of him, and to hear him call my name brought me up all standing. "Yes sir?" said I, looking up to him on his poop.

"I'll sign you on," said Captain Patton.

I felt like saying, "The devil you will! You'll not!" But a berth I must have, and no choice about it.

Soon after supper that evening the crew came aboard. Supper was one surprise, the crew another. Who ever heard of the mate eating alone in the dining saloon, and the skipper alone in the after saloon? Maybe, had I been a bit quicker-witted, I'd have caught on.

With supper done, I went to look at the crew. There were two Chileños, three Cape Verders, and a Brazilian. "So that's the crew the skipper's picked to take his ship round the Horn in winter, eh?" said I to myself. "Where are the others?" I asked; for there should have been eight hands. They shrugged their shoulders, and I guessed the other two were not going to show up. The tug-boat's whistle sounded, and I ordered them out to take her line. I'd have to take a couple of pierhead jumps in place of the missing men; and you can bet I meant to take good white men if possible.

"Who wants a voyage in a good ship, lads?" I called to the loafers on the pier-head as the ship was gliding out to the stream. All I had for answer was sneers. No one was going to sign in a ship with a crew such as mine. But at the last moment a little ragged, skinny fellow came shoving through the crowd, followed by a huge and grinning black with a big brass ring in his nose. The little fellow jumped to the deck, and fell sprawling. Soused to the eyes with sailor-town liquor, of course. The black leaped lightly aboard, and lifted him to his feet. Half an eye'd tell you that he'd been drunk in half the world's seaports. A poor wizened little wastrel, with watery red-rimmed eyes, and a fringe of gray hair showing under his battered old hat. He was sixty if a day.

"What's your name?" I asked him.

"Utt, sir. Tom Utt," he replied.

As soon as the ship was a bit offshore the tug let her go, and I went to setting sail. And what a job I'd have had but for Utt, who did the singing out on the ropes, so that all hands could pull together; and the big Fiji man, who was strong as any three men in the crew. The dagoes didn't even know English enough to understand my orders. The Fiji man knew none either: but Utt translated to him in pidgin, and then the dagoes followed the great black to the ropes.

I WAS leading the crew to the poop to hoist the sails on the mizzen when the skipper noticed Utt. "Keep that man off the poop, Mister," he ordered. "He's drunk." What the blazes was the matter with the skipper now? Ordering a man kept off the poop just because he was drunk! White men were usually drunk when they went to sea. But I told Utt to go forward and coil the ropes up.

Without Utt, they had a hard time getting the sails on the mizzen aloft. By when the canvas was on her, it was almost dark. Utt came to me then, sober.

"Mister mate, 'ow did I ever come to be in this here ship, sir?" he asked, with a disgusted look at the dagoes.

I sent him to the wheel; and a short while later a woman appeared in the

lighted chart-room. And what a woman! My heaven, she was scarce more than a girl; and delicate as a lily. A lovely little oval face, wide gray eyes, and soft hair in silky ringlets round her pretty forehead.

"You fool," thought I, "bringing such a tender little thing to sea!" Now I knew why the skipper had wanted a family man for mate, instead of some fellow who'd be falling head over flipper in love with his wife. Now I knew why he'd picked foreigners, who didn't know English enough to be singing the rough chanteys that sailors often sing when setting sail. I knew, too, why he hadn't wanted a drunken sailor on the poop.

The girl was years younger than the skipper, who was about my age. In a minute she stepped from the chart-room, and stood out on deck letting her eyes get accustomed to the starlight. As soon as she saw her husband, her arms were round his neck; and she drew his face down and kissed him on his lips. Easy to see that she was altogether in love. For a time they walked the dark poop, talking in low voices.

Soon after they were gone below, the old sailor came up to me, as though wanting to say something.

"What is it, Utt?" I asked.

"My Lor', sir!" said he, and started on forward. I called him back.

"You watch out for yourself amongst those dagoes. Dagoes are handy with a knife," I said.

"It aint meself I'm thinkin' of, sir," said he. "S'pose anythin' was to 'appen, sir, wi' that gal aboard?"

"Nothing'll happen. Go forward," said I. And you bet I hoped nothing would happen!

A LONELY life I led, eating always alone; the skipper and the girl ate in the after saloon. By day she spent most of the time on deck, in a chair on the poop: for we had fine weather and very light breezes from the start. They'd sit side by side for hours, holding hands. Often I caught Utt gazing at them, and always with a troubled look. And a look of veneration, too, for the girl. Well I knew that in all his sordid life about the dismal dens of the world's sailor-towns, he'd hardly set eye upon a decent girl, let alone on such a lovely little one.

The skipper called me one day just after Utt was gone from the wheel. "Keep that man off the poop in the daytime. Let him steer at night only," he

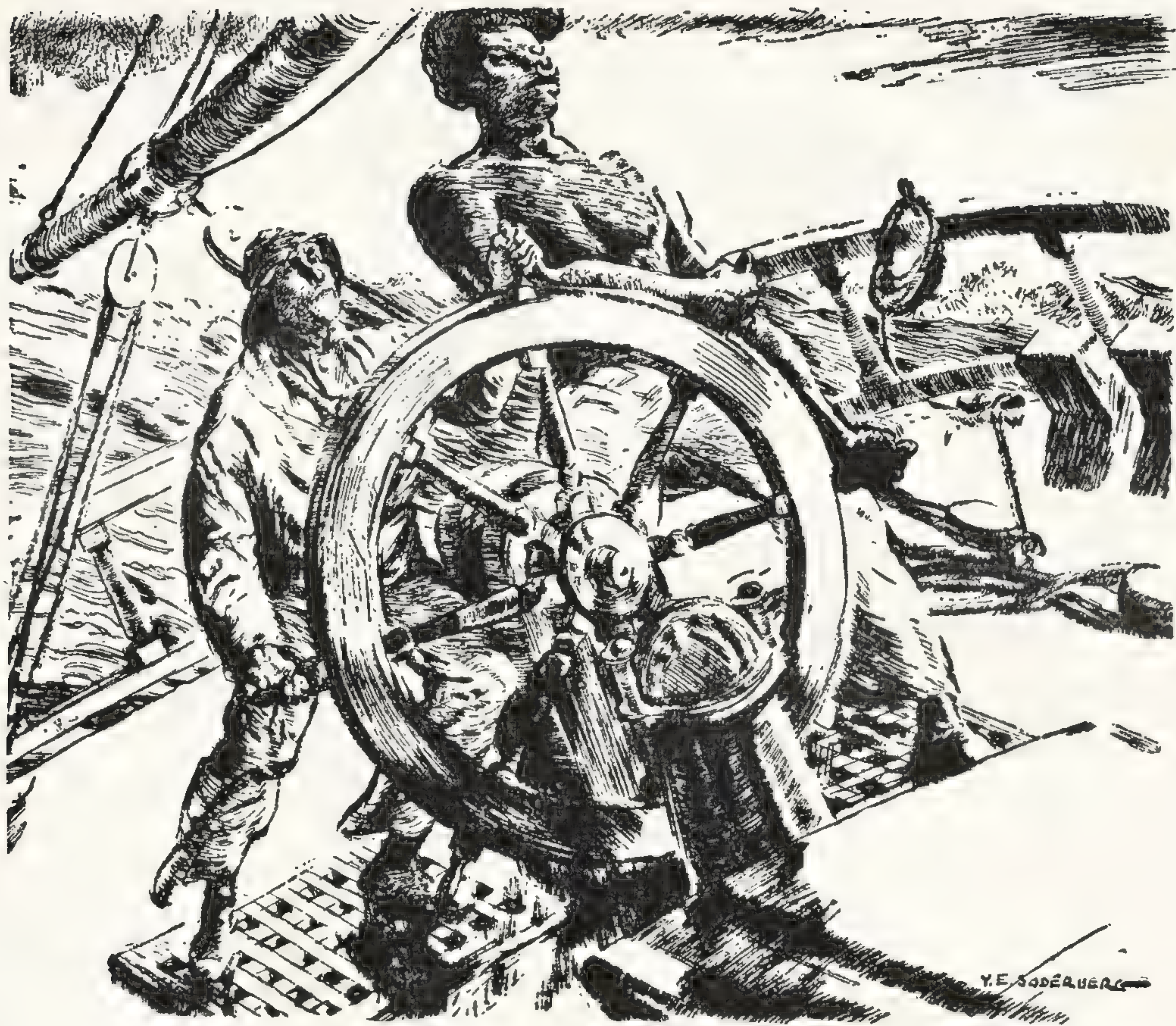


ordered. And I knew that the girl had noticed Utt's ragged wretchedness, and been horrified at the sight of the poor little devil with his blotchy face and red-rimmed watery eyes. The dagoes and Fiji man she doubtless thought romantic; the dagoes with their earrings and bracelets, the Fiji man with the ring in his nose. That night I called Utt to me and said: "You'll steer at night only. You'll keep off the poop by day."

"Aye-aye, sir. I was half expectin' it, sir," said he, and I felt a bit sorry for the poor little wretch.

Day after day we kept light breezes, and crawled at a snail's pace. Plain enough we were in for a long voyage. The skipper began to look mighty worried. Well, no skipper wants to crawl as we were crawling, of course: but there was nothing to worry about that I could see. Lots of ships make long voyages.

Some six weeks or so after we sailed, the girl ceased coming on deck by day, and came by night only. We were in warm weather by then, and she always came on deck wearing a long kimono. If she had been pretty before, she was far more so now. Rather than a little blos-



som, she seemed a sweet ripe fruit with the bloom on it. And she and the skipper appeared to be more than ever in love with each other. He'd take her face in his hands and gaze down into her shining eyes with a look of veneration in his own, and she'd look up to him just as he looked down at her.

Something began to worry me, and I couldn't say what it was. I saw that Utt was worried too, so one night when he left the wheel, I called him to me. "What's on your mind?" I asked.

"We're bound round the Horn, aint we, sir?" he asked.

"What of it?" said I.

"You aint seed, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Get it off your chest. What is it?"

"Why, sir—the skipper's wife, sir—" he began, and stopped.

"What about the skipper's wife?" I demanded.

"She's a-goin' to 'ave a baby, sir," said Utt.

I was too taken aback to speak. Now I knew why the skipper was so worried over our slow progress. He'd expected to have reached Valparaiso in a couple of months, no doubt: and there wasn't

a chance of it now. The baby would be born at sea. . . .

We were creeping slowly southward through the southern tropic a week or so later when the dagoes came in a body to the cabin door one day. The black was at the wheel. A sullen Chileño held their food out for the skipper to see. He looked at it and said: "Get forward, the lot of you! A skipper can't apologize to a crew just because the grub happens to be bad. The supply is limited, and what is, is; and that's the end of it."

The dagoes went forward, muttering to one another: and were no sooner gone into the forecabin than the devil of a racket rose there. I snatched a belaying pin from the rail and ran forward myself.

In the far corner of the forecabin was Utt, with a buck-board in each hand, defending himself from the dagoes with their knives. They turned on me when I sprang in, but being dagoes, dared nothing beyond scowls. I called Utt out to the deck. "What started that?" I asked him.

"They was sore because I wouldn't go aft with 'em, sir," he said; "they thought as me bein' a white man, the skipper'd

have done something about the grub if I'd gone along."

I took Utt to the poop and told the skipper about it. Frowning at the little wretch, he said: "You old fool, why didn't you come aft with them? It would have made no difference, and you'd have kept out of trouble."

"He can't go on living with that lot now, sir," said I. "He'd get a knife in his ribs—and we're going to need him off the Horn."

The skipper paled at the words, "off the Horn"—then said to me testily: "It's your business. I can't be bothered about the old fool."

Except in the cook's room there was no spare bunk in the ship. You can't very well put a white man to bunk with a Chink. I was trying to think up a way to suggest to Utt that he bunk with the cook, when the skipper called from the cabin: "Let him bunk with the cook!"

"A fine kettle o' fish, sir," murmured Utt, his red face going redder yet.

"I'm sorry," said I. "I'd put you in my cabin if there was an extra bunk in it." And I half meant what I said, for I was beginning to feel downright sorry for the poor little wastrel.

"All right, sir; I'll bunk wi' the Chink," said he, and added: "I'd do anything for ye, sir."

"Thank you, Utt," said I; and thenceforth he bunked with the cook. And day after day the dagoes joked amongst themselves about a white man who'd bunk with a Chinaman. "Utt, you're doing mighty well to keep your temper with those swabs," I said to him one day.

"This ship aint no place to be startin' no trouble, sir," said he.

Day on day dragged by, without a whitecap anywhere on all the windless sea; the airs so light that the ship often all but lost steerage-way. One day at last she lost it quite, and lay erect, her canvas hanging flat; her shadow motionless upon a motionless sea. The woman had not been on deck for many nights; the skipper but seldom, and then for only a few nervous minutes. The ship was left to me.

UTT was at the wheel that windless morning. Now that the girl never came on deck, I let him steer by day. Presently I saw him beckoning 'o me.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Hark to that, sir, will ye!" he said; and at first I could hear nothing. And

then there came to me a sort of wailing sound the like of which I'd never heard.

"What the devil is it, Utt?" I asked.

"The baby's come, sir," said Utt.

That evening the skipper came on deck, white-faced and trembling. "How's the ship?" he asked.

"The ship's all right, sir," said I; and he was instantly gone.

THEN for over two weeks I sailed the ship alone, with never any but light breezes in her canvas; the skipper appearing once in a while, to ask how things were, and to hurry below at my answer. And then one morning he came on deck looking proud as a peacock. All smiles, till he saw Utt at the wheel.

"Send that man from the wheel!" he called to me sharply: so I ordered a dago to the wheel. And then the girl appeared, with her baby in her arms. She held it up for the skipper to see. He took it from her, and the two of them stood looking down at it and from it to each other. Presently they began to walk up and down the poop, the skipper with the baby in one arm and his other round his wife.

It was the day after that that the wind came at last. A real wind now, that, catching the ship under full sail, sent her reeling over till her lee rail scooped water. The skipper came up on the run, shouting: "All hands shorten sail!"

Each time the men went aloft to furl a sail Utt led the way, and I brought up the rear, cursing the frightened dagoes for their slowness. Seeing from the poop how slow they were, the skipper ordered the Fiji man from the wheel to lend a hand, and took the wheel himself. After that, with Utt shouting directions in pidgin to the black, and the black doing the work of three ordinary men, things went better; and we got the ship shortened down.

At a little before dawn next day the wind eased, and at dawn I set sail again, Utt singing out on the ropes, and the black furnishing most of the man-power. By the time I had sail set, it was the black's wheel.

The black had been at the wheel but a few minutes, and the dagoes were not yet done coiling the ropes up, when, looking astern, I saw a thunder-dark cloud sweeping up, and beneath it a long line of angry white water.

"All hands shorten sail!" I shouted, and ran for the deck; but was not yet come to the halyards to let them go when

the squall struck her, and a big sea came roaring inboard. I saw the skipper run from the chart-room, take the wheel, and gesture to the Fiji man to help us with sails.

With a hard wind from dead astern she was a difficult ship to steer, and there should have been two men at her wheel: but I couldn't help that. The skipper would have to hold her alone. He held her, all right, till I had everything off her but the topsails and fore-sail. Then, with the ship rolling horribly in the great following seas, I ordered the Fiji man and Utt to the wheel.

At the moment that Utt stepped to the poop, the black at his heels, the ship took a roll so wild that it seemed she was going to roll right over. There was a cry of alarm from the skipper, and next instant he was flung bodily over the wheel to the deck on its other side.

The Fiji man leaped past Utt, and ran to the skipper, and I ran after him.

"Take me below," he moaned.

"No sir," said I. "Your wife's frightened enough without knowing you're hurt. You'll stay in the chart-room—and I'm going to take the ship to the Falklands. If you think we're going to try rounding the Horn with this crew, you're mistaken, sir." Then, Utt and I having laid him on the chart-room settee, I went down to the after saloon.

With her baby in her arms, the girl huddled white-faced in the corner of the sofa. "The ship's all right," I told her. "Your husband told me to tell you that he won't be able to come below for a time."

At that her face went whiter yet.

"I daren't stay here alone," she cried.

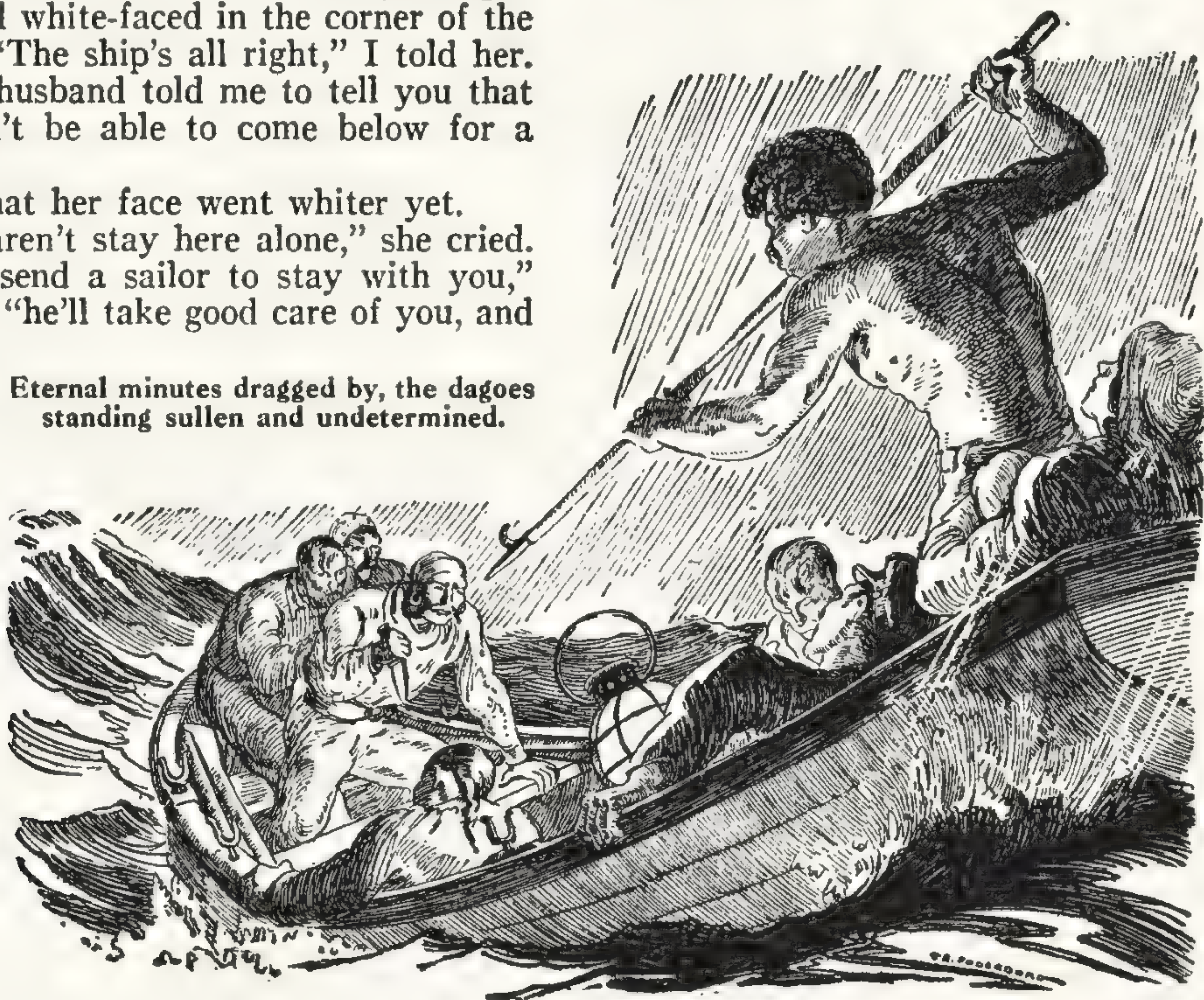
"I'll send a sailor to stay with you," said I; "he'll take good care of you, and

his looks needn't trouble you at all." And I called up the companion ladder to Utt.

The girl fairly shuddered at sight of him. But at that moment the ship rolled wildly, almost throwing her to the deck. Utt strode to her and took the baby from her arms. His feet braced to the rolling, he stood above her, looking down into its face. And such a look as was on the little wastrel's own face I never had seen. Wailing a little, the baby raised its tiny fingers till they were touching his stubby chin. He raised his eyes. They met mine. And in them was such a look as maybe you'd see in the eyes of some hoary old sinner who'd gazed on the face of God who cared naught for his sins.

"This man has had children of his own, and understands babies," I said to the girl. And you should have seen Utt's face then! I tucked her tight in the corner of the sofa, and went up again to the deck. And as I stepped to the deck, the dagoes came swarming up the poop ladder. A sea had swamped the galley stove, and there was no coffee nor any hot breakfast for them, nothing but hardtack. I took a pin from the rail and ran at them. Knowing that the skipper was hurt, and I alone, they faced me; and one drew his knife. I knew that did I not quickly master them, they'd all be swarming down to the saloon, and then God help the girl! The knife fell to the

Eternal minutes dragged by, the dagoes standing sullen and undetermined.



deck as my pin came down upon its owner's wrist. I kicked it overboard, and ran at them. With me at their heels, they fled. I chased them clear to their fore-castle. Then, thinking that all was well, thinking how in a few days I'd have the ship at the Falklands, where the skipper could get mended up and a new crew be obtained, I started back to the poop. My troubles were over, thought I. And never was any man more mistaken.

HOLD her! Hold her!" I yelled to the Fiji man as a screaming squall whipped the foresail clean out of its bolt-ropes and sent it flying in tatters over the tumultuous sea ahead. And as I yelled, I dashed for the wheel to lend him a hand.

Knocking the wind clear out of me, a frightful rook threw me against the taffrail. In vain I tried to move toward the wheel. In vain the Fiji man tried to hold her.

A grayback roared aboard as she broached to, bursting the main hatch in and leaving a wide gap in the bulwarks. I saw the dagoes run from their fore-castle, then turn and run back, banging the door behind them.

Her topsails aback, the seas pouring into her through the smashed hatch, the ship lay lifeless. I shouted to the Fiji man and pointed to the boat. And then Utt appeared, and I shouted, "Where's the girl?" And his gesture told me that he'd brought her up to the chart-room. We ran after the Fiji man, to get the boat swung out. Just then the dagoes appeared, shouting and cursing, splashing their way along the water-swept decks to the boat. I seized the boathook, swung it above my head, and shouted "Back! Back, you curs!" And then in a jiffy Utt and the black had the boat swung out, and Utt shouted something in pidgin to the black, and the two of them ran for the chart-room.

The Fiji man returned with the woman tucked under one arm, and the baby in the other. Utt came supporting the skipper. They got them into the boat, and I ordered them to get into her themselves. The Fiji man obeyed, but Utt ran for the chart-room again. I hove the Chinese steward and cook into her; then, shouting to Utt, I faced the mob of jabbering dagoes, to hold them back till he should come. In a jiffy he reappeared, running surefooted across the rolling poop, a box of cabin biscuit and some canned milk in his arms.

"One at a time!" I shouted to the dagoes; but, beyond all control at last, they swarmed over the rail in a cursing mob. I followed the last of them.

"Unhook! Shove her clear!" I shouted, and bent to unhook the stern davit tackle. The boat lifted high to a swell, then dropped with a swoop to the trough. Stumbling, I threw out a hand, and grasped the rope of the tackle at the moment that the boat dropped. Before I could let it go, my hand was drawn between the shell and the sheave. Dizzy with the pain of my crushed hand, I reached for my knife, to cut the tackle. My knife fell to the sea as Utt slashed his knife through the rope. Then he was shouting something in pidgin to the Fiji man, and the two of them were shoving the boat from the ship's low side. We were but well clear when she sank like a stone. And scarcely was she gone when the wind began to fall.

With the white-faced girl beside him, clutching her baby, the skipper lay unconscious in the stern. I looked at the food Utt had brought. Enough for the woman for five or six days. "Utt, see if there's any food in the locker," I ordered. He went forward, and returned with a box of hardtack: enough to last the rest of us some days at two biscuits a day per man. And Port Stanley was a good two hundred miles away.

GET hold of those oars and pull!" I ordered; and for perhaps an hour the dagoes lay back on the oars. Then, saying they must eat, they refused to pull another stroke. I gave each a biscuit. They ate in sullen silence, their eyes on the girl—to whom I had given cabin biscuit and for whom I had opened a can of milk.

"Don't be afraid—" I began, and could say no more. Her face became indistinct. The next thing I was aware of, was Utt's voice saying: "The mate's comin' to, ma'am." He had bound my crushed hand with a strip torn from his already ragged shirt. And he had taken his oilskins off to wrap about the girl. His bare skin showed beneath the remains of his tattered shirt.

And then I heard a sullen voice demanding cabin biscuit. The skipper was conscious now, and the girl was breaking a biscuit and putting pieces between his lips.

Utt said something to the Fiji man, who at once took off his oilskins and tossed them to him. He wrapped them

about the skipper. And then a swart dago rose and started toward the stern. Utt was instantly on his feet, the boat-hook in his hands, its sharp end pointing at the fellow's chest. The dago stopped, and sat down.

DAY passed. Night came with the wind gone and the sea flat. Silence. Utt lit the lantern, and turned it so its light shone forward upon the dagoes, leaving the girl and the skipper, him and myself, in darkness. Now and again the baby wailed, and the girl's voice rose softly. Now and again there came a moan from the skipper: now and again a muttering from the dagoes. Seated in the bow, the Fiji man was just visible. By and by Utt called something to him. He nodded. . . . Presently the dagoes slept, and he rose on soundless feet. The lantern-light gleamed on knife-blades—he was drawing the sleeping dagoes' knives from their belts, and dropping them to the sea.

There was a sudden loud oath. One of the dagoes had awakened, and all were upon the Fiji man in a cursing mob. Utt was up at once, wielding the boathook; and in a minute there was silence again. Again the Fiji man sat in the bow. The lantern light shone on red wounds upon his face and his breast.

Day came. The dagoes watching sullenly, I gave the girl cabin biscuit and milk. Only three of them had knives now. Presently they started to jabber amongst themselves, then pushed the oars out and began to row. The Fiji man followed suit at once, but after pulling a few strokes drew in his oar. Then, grinning, the dagoes also drew in their oars; and I knew that they had only rowed to find out whether the black had any strength left.

It started to rain—bitterly cold rain. Utt said something to the black, who rose and started toward us. The dagoes let him come, unmolested; then, as Utt gave him a cabin biscuit, they broke into furious jabber.

"The game's against us, Utt," I said.

"Maybe a ship'll pick us up, sir," said he.

"No ship could see us in this rain," I said.

"It won't rain forever, sir," said he.

"It won't need to. A little while will be enough to finish us," said I.

All day the rain beat down. At night-fall the Fiji man, weak from loss of blood, lay down in the stern. With no

oilskins to keep the icy rain from us, Utt and I shivered. The dagoes sat huddled close together for warmth. Utt lit the lantern. Now and again there came a moan from the half-conscious skipper. Now and again the baby wailed, and the girl's voice rose softly.

Late in the night the three dagoes with knives rose to their feet. Utt was asleep beside me. I tried to rouse him, and could not. I lifted the boathook with my good hand. Too heavy. I could not balance it. The game was up.

And then there was a stir beside me. The Fiji man rose to his knees and took the boathook from me. I could hear his teeth chattering as, leaning forward so that his head and shoulders, his arms and the boathook, were illumined, he pointed it at the dagoes.

Eternal minutes dragged by, the three dagoes standing sullen and undetermined.

The rain ceased. The dagoes sat down. Looking astern, pointing astern, they jabbered excitedly. But I was not to be caught. They wanted me and the black to turn, that they might spring on and overpower us.

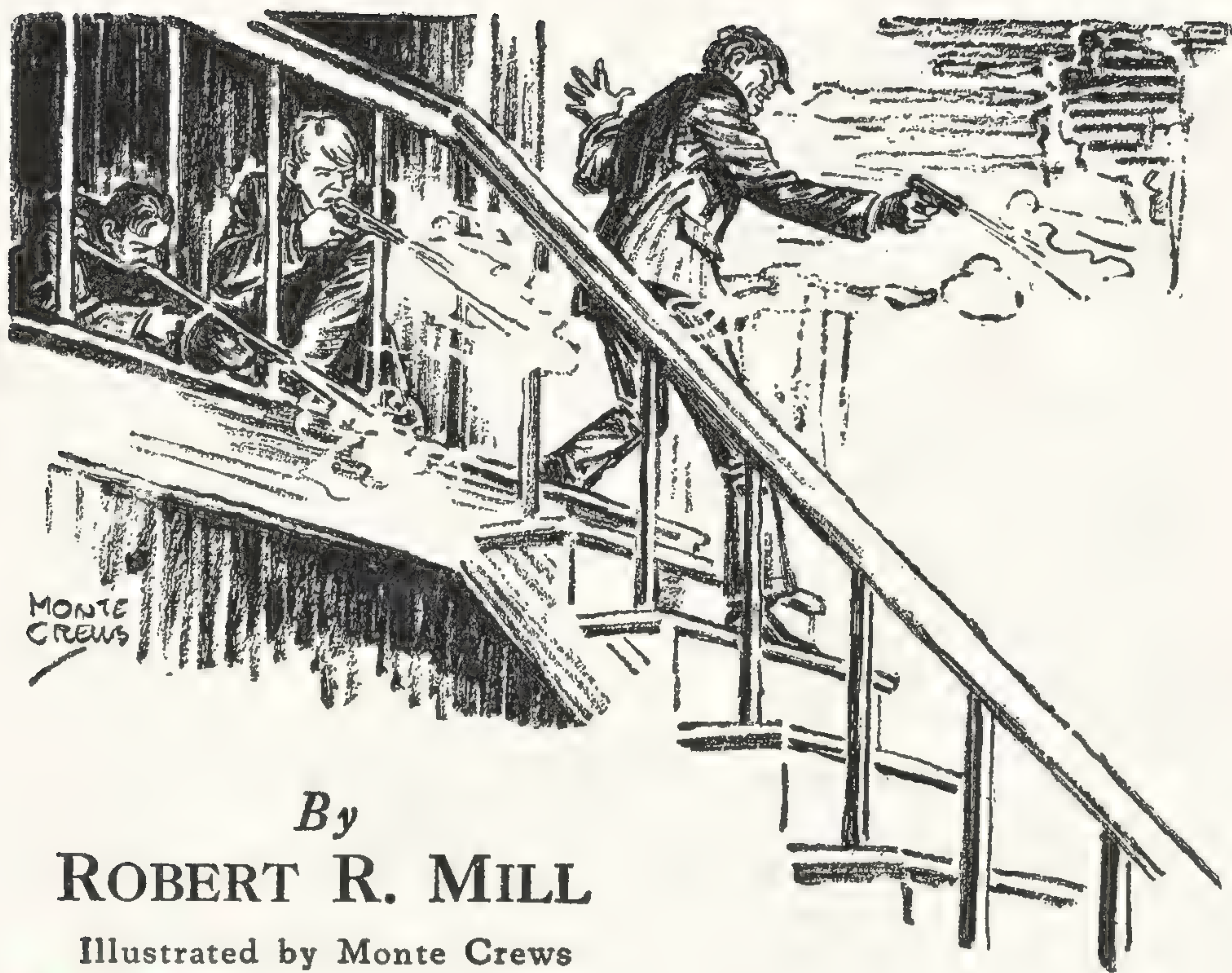
And then I was aware of the girl rising to her feet behind me. Next moment her hand was on my shoulder, and she was whispering in my ear. So I turned then, and saw it—a ship's light coming up, a blue flare burning on her fore-castle head to tell us she had seen our lantern.

And then, faint with the pain of my crushed hand, I fell sprawling over the Fiji man. He collapsed with me. Together, he, Utt and I lay in a heap in the boat's bottom.

WHEN I came to, I was lying on a sofa in a ship's saloon. The first thing I was aware of was the grinning face of the Fiji man, blocking an open porthole above me.

And then I was aware of Utt. Balancing himself easily against the ship's slow rolling, he was pacing to and fro across the saloon, his face bent above the baby in his arms. And you should have seen the light in his little red-rimmed watery eyes, the look of sheer happiness upon his blotchy little face.

And last I was aware of the skipper seated in an armchair at the far side of the saloon. His arm was round the girl, and her head was on his shoulder. Their eyes followed Utt as he paced slowly to and fro, to and fro. And you should have seen the look on their faces!



By
ROBERT R. MILL

Illustrated by Monte Crews

OUTWARDLY it was a normal Saturday night, or early Sunday morning, in the Club Moderne. There was the usual crowd, with out-of-towners in the majority. The smoke formed a haze which even the spotlights could not dispel as the "Fifty Gorgeous Girls"—all twenty-eight of them—retired from the stage. The master of ceremonies said, speaking into a microphone that gave his voice a blatant quality in keeping with the surroundings:

"Now, boys and girls,—particularly you girls,—I have what you have been waiting for. The answer to your prayers. None other than Harry Lovalt. What are you going to sing, Harry?"

Amid the applause that followed, a young man appeared at the side of the speaker. His face was weakly handsome. His manner was confident—too confident. The careful observer might have suspected that it concealed nervousness.

Less than a year before, this young man had appeared, apparently from nowhere, to place first in a radio amateur program, then the vogue on the air. There had been a theater engagement, also some shorts for the motion pictures. Then the rain of gold began; and now, while it continued unabated, Harry Lov-

alt was better known to millions than many a prime minister who made decisions affecting the future of the world.

For this young man possessed the ability to put into his voice some quality that caused it to carry to the heart and mind of each and every feminine listener the conviction that she, and she alone, was the person for whom the dulcet tones were intended. Tired stenographers, living in dreary rooming-houses, willingly accepted this voice as the substitute for the Prince Charming who somehow or other failed to appear. Misunderstood wives found this same voice recompense for thoughtless husbands. Bored society girls obtained from the voice a thrill not found with correctly tailored youths who sprinkled their conversation with exploits of the polo-field.

Even here, in the crowded night-club, the voice carried the illusion. But the song was directed at one certain table.

At that table sat a girl—alone. Her gown was one of those simple things that cause every knowing woman to writhe with envy. Her jewelry would have made a respectable display for any smart establishment.

And the girl matched her appointments. Her air of boredom blended well with her gown, though it detracted a bit from her beauty. But she had enough of

Journeyman Cop

Tiny David of the State Police and Duke Ashby of the F. B. I. work together, in this fine novelette to solve a kidnaping mystery. . . . The solution comes, however, only in a blaze of gun-fire.

that to spare. She was brave; she was spoiled; she was stubborn.

There was no secret regarding her identity: Mildred Marport, one of the richest girls in the world—daughter of old Richard Marport, inventor of the cereal that “Changed your morning grouch into a desire to lick the world.”

Nor was there any secret regarding the reason for her presence in the Club Moderne. For weeks the gossip columns had informed the more or less interested world that the wheat-and-corn heiress and the Number One Crooner were “that way.” The same pillars of light and information had explained the two rather grim-looking men, whose coats bulged around the armpits, and who occupied a table to the right of the girl:

“Papa Marport can’t keep the dashing Mildred out of the hot spots where Harry

is doing his crooning, so he has hired a bodyguard to trail along—just in case.”

As the song ended, feminine patrons sighed. Male escorts gnashed their teeth. Both sexes applauded.

Harry Lovalt, bound for the side of the girl, brushed by a table occupied by two men.

“Just a minute, Mr. Lovalt.”

The crooner paused; then, as he peered through the semi-darkness that had settled over the room as the patrons began dancing, he recognized the speaker.

The color faded from the face of the singer, leaving it pale beneath the make-up. He clutched at the back of a chair for support.

“Split-lip!” he gasped.



"Go easy with that!" snapped the man who had called him by name, and whose upper lip was covered with a trim mustache. "My name is Goodby here. Sit down!"

Harry Lovalt fought for self-possession; he attempted a smile as he said:

"Sorry. Somebody waiting for me. Nice to have seen you."

The man with the mustache laughed mockingly. "Seats!" he barked.

Ghosts of the past flitted before the eyes of Harry Lovalt. The orchestra,

Harry Lovalt's fists were clenched.

"What—what do you want? I'm going straight, now. I've made good. For God's sake—"

Goodby silenced him with a wave of the hand.

"Keep your brassière on," he snarled. "Don't fight for your honor until some-



playing a dance hit, became a band of unskilled musicians doing their best with a military march. The dancers, the people at the tables, even the waiters, became impersonal figures in gray. The blue serge suit of the man with the mustache aided the illusion. The crooner seemed to see brass buttons on it.

A look of cruel pleasure crossed the face of the man who said he was known as Goodby. He spoke again: "Seats!"

Automatically, Lovalt sank, almost fell, into the chair the man indicated. The performer's hands were folded on the table before him. From force of habit, his head was bowed. Instead of tables covered with linen, and littered with dishes, glasses and bottles, he saw bare wooden tables and rude benches.

The man with the mustache laughed easily.

"That's much better." He turned to his companion. "Habit is a wonderful thing." He addressed the singer: "Had almost five years of that, didn't you?" He made no pause for the answer. "Away out in San Jackin. Who would think that we would meet here? Who would think I'd recognize you?"

He studied the face of the crooner.

"That plastic surgeon earned his money. And *Lovalt* is as good a name as any other. Doesn't sound anything like your own."

body makes a pass at you. Maybe I want to build you up, instead of tearing you down."

There was disbelief in Lovalt's eyes.

"What do you want?"

"Nothing much." Goodby lowered his voice. "The Marport dame leaves tomorrow night for her camp in the Adirondacks. Her old man won't stand for you around the place, but you are booked for the Moon Lake House as soon as you close here next week. Nice, aint it?"

"How did you know all this?"

Goodby shrugged his shoulders.

"I get around! Now, when you get up there, we'll get in touch with you. You'll do what we say. It'll be just too bad if you don't."

The crooner squared his thin shoulders.

"Leave Miss Marport out of this," he begged. "I'd—I'd die before I would do anything that would harm her."

"The twist won't be hurt," the man with the mustache promised. "But you'll get a chance to die if you don't do what we tell you."

Goodby perceived the desperate hope that flashed through Lovalt's mind.

"And another thing: Maybe you could put in a squeal, and have us picked up. That doesn't button our lips. And when we talk, you change from Lovalt, the crooner, to an ex-con, named—you know."

He saw the gray shadow of despair reappear upon the face of the singer.

"It's—it's a snatch job, of course."

Goodby bowed mockingly.

"Remarkable, Watson! Yes, it is a snatch job. Play with us, and we keep you in the clear. And the twist doesn't get hurt. Cross us, and—" He left the threat uncompleted. "Come! What do you say?"

Mr. Crosby bore down, and the car resumed its former pace. "A dame as good-looking as she is," he asserted, "doesn't need brains. And who are you to throw stones? That sap, as you call him, draws down more jack for lifting his voice in song a few minutes every day, than we do for shagging over these roads for a month. If you want to see a real sap—"

"I don't want to," Mr. David protested, "but I can't help looking at you. Meanwhile, let's have less of your so-called thoughts, and more of your alleged expert driving."



"Just a minute, Mr. Lovalt." The crooner paused; then, as he recognized the speaker, his color faded. "Split-lip!" he gasped.

Lovalt, ever a weakling, surrendered.

"I'll go through with it," he promised. He tried to justify himself. "I have to."

The man with the mustache nodded as he pushed a menu toward the crooner and produced a pen.

"We won't keep you from your friend any longer, Mr. Lovalt." His voice was bitter with irony. "But first you must give us your autograph."

"If you ask me," volunteered Lieutenant Crosby, of the Black Horse Troop, New York State Police, "my sympathies are all with them." He gave proof of this by slowing down the troop-car he was driving. "I am not in favor of breaking up love's young dream."

"Very laudable," declared Lieutenant Edward David, his companion. "Now that you have gone on record, just put your Number Fourteen hoof back on that pedal. Richard Marport, no less, has asked the Skipper for action. If he doesn't get it, we will need sympathy a lot more than that fool girl and that sap of a crooner."

"Yes, Lieutenant," said Mr. Crosby. The tone of his voice conveyed neither respect nor obedience. His thumb indicated the pocket of his coat. "Care to see the morning paper? There are some pictures in it you can look at."

Lieutenant David, well over six feet and broad in proportion, and therefore known as Tiny, ignored both the thrust and the offer. He wore a worried frown.

Mr. Crosby heeded the request for silence for at least two minutes. Then he made an additional offering:

"No use for her old man to go into his dance. When a dame picks out the guy she is going to marry, she checks her brains—if any. Look at the Captain, and Max Payton." (The top-sergeant.) "They're both married, aren't they? I'll bet that if you looked around hard enough, even you could find some girl willing to look at your face for the rest of her life."

These profound observations evoked no comment, and Mr. Crosby continued:

"Suppose she did beat it during the night? She knew that if she headed for



"My name is Ashby," the thin young man smiled. "David is the name," said the trooper. . . . "I surely was tickled when I heard you were coming on this job, Mr. Ashby."

the altar in the regular way, her old man would call the play off-side because she is six months shy of the correct 'I do' age. That six months will mean a lot more to them now than when they are sixty. And the lad has brains enough to know that the old man can, and probably will, cut dear Darter off without a thin dime. So more power to them, says Mrs. Crosby's boy James."

Tiny David sighed softly. "Is Mrs. Crosby's boy fond of walking?" he asked.

"Only to his meals," Crosby admitted. "Why?"

"Because if he doesn't shut up, he is going to get tossed out of this car. I am trying to think."

Mr. Crosby was all attention.

"I'll keep quiet," he promised. "And I'll keep a pencil handy so we can make a note if you get a thought. The last time, no notes were taken, and nobody would believe it."

There was no sign that the pencil was needed as the car passed through the village of Moon Lake. Tiny David remained silent as they turned in at a private drive, proceeded for a full mile, and then pulled up before a palatial Adirondack camp, comprised of a group of rustic but imposing buildings.

"The less you say," Tiny David declared, "the less you will show your ignorance."

Mr. Crosby gazed at him with pain in his eyes.

"I was counting on letting you stage the exhibition," he countered.

But Richard Marport solved the problem for them by doing all the talking: His daughter had remained home the night before. That was unusual. At about ten o'clock she had a telephone-call. Her father met her on her way back to her room, and demanded to know if she was going out. She had glanced at her clothing—she was wearing pajamas—and demanded to know if that looked like suitable attire for a cold Adirondack night.

The occupants of the camp retired as usual. Miss Marport did not appear at breakfast. There was nothing unusual about that; but when her maid carried a tray to her room, the girl was gone.

That was all. There was no note. But Richard Marport had decided views about what had happened.

She had eloped with that so-and-so of a crooner. They intended to be married quietly somewhere. In fact, by this time they probably were married. The State police had been notified four hours ago. This was a fine time for them to show up. Just another example of things taxpayers paid plenty for—and didn't get.

Tiny David shifted his position slightly in the chair. It was the most comfortable chair in the room. He had noted that fact before he selected it.

"We did a bit of checking before we came here," he explained.

Two snorts greeted this assertion.

"And what did you find out?"

"Harry Lovalt is missing from the Moon Lake House."

"Certainly he is missing!" exploded the irate father. "He can't elope with my daughter and not be missing!"

The trooper ignored the outburst.

"Lovalt's car is in the garage at the hotel."

Marport was silent.

"All your cars are accounted for," continued Tiny David.

"So what?" demanded Marport.

"All garages and taxicab stands within a radius of fifty miles have been checked. Their cars are accounted for."

Again a snort of indignation came from the manufacturer.

"All this," he declared, "is a lengthy way of telling me you've done nothing."

"WE wired ahead," the trooper went on, "and the New York train was checked at Utica. They weren't on it. Nobody answering their descriptions had been on it. The same applies to the Montreal train."

Marport's gesture displayed irritation.

"Don't tell me where they *aren't*! Tell me where to find them."

Tiny David continued in a conversational tone:

"Bad fog last night. Didn't lift until after eight this morning. Assuming they had a friend with a car, or that they were able to hire one at a place we didn't check, it would have been impossible for them to get many miles away from here before eight o'clock this morning. The fog stopped our patrols, and when those boys quit, it is no time for an inexperienced driver to be on the roads."

Marport's reaction to this was additional impatience.

"Then they haven't gone far. Why don't you get them?"

"We had the alarm at nine. The entire territory was bottled fifteen minutes later. Nothing has gone through."

One foot traced a pattern on the floor.

"Patrols have checked every hotel and boarding-house in the territory. Every town clerk has been warned about issuing a license. Every clergyman and justice of the peace has been checked, and warned not to perform the ceremony. They had no information. There has been nothing since then, because they were told to inform us at once if your daughter and Lovalt appeared."

The trooper leaned forward.

"Mr. Marport, just what makes you so sure your daughter ran away to get married?"

Red stained the face of the man to whom the question was directed.

"My daughter is headstrong and foolish, but I know her too well to believe for a minute that she would go away

with this chap unless she was sure he was going to marry her."

Tiny David shook his head. "That wasn't what I meant, Mr. Marport."

"What did you mean? Damn it, speak out!"

The trooper stood up. He started toward a telephone on a table.

"You are the doctor, Mr. Marport. But if my advice was asked, I would put a call in at once for the Department of Justice. We are rather proud of our outfit, but the Federal men have received training in special crimes that puts them ahead of us. And they have far better technical facilities. Also, State lines mean nothing to them. We will stay right on the job, and we will be tickled to death to coöperate with them in every way after they take over. We know this country."

He picked up the telephone, and asked for long-distance.

Marport's face was ashen.

"Just what do you mean?" he gasped.

Lieutenant David said to the operator:

"Long-distance? This is an emergency police call. I want to speak to the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, in Washington, D. C. . . . Yes, I'll hold the line. Rush it, please."

He turned to the stricken father. His voice was gruff, but kindly:

"You can help us most by keeping calm, Mr. Marport. Thanks to the man I am calling, this isn't half as serious as it would have been a year or so ago. But we must face it. I have every reason to believe that your daughter has been kidnaped."

SPLIT-LIP CRANEL, alias Goodby, lighted a cigarette, inserted it in his mouth, and rubbed his hands with satisfaction. This was all to the good. Smart thinking had covered everything.

Here they were, in a house in Canaras Lake, only twenty miles from Moon Lake, and safe as a church. Right now, Graveyard Foltard was sitting on the front porch in a reclining chair, giving a convincing impersonation of a chronic invalid, one of the hundreds who seek health in Canaras Lake.

Every now and again, Graveyard would give a realistic cough. No great ability was needed for him to play this part, for nature had done much for him. His hollow cheeks and sallow complexion had earned him his nickname long before this job was planned.

At irregular intervals, Sexy Lou visited the front porch, tucked the rugs about Graveyard, and conversed with him. The part fit Lou like skin-tights.

These two were known to the village as Howard Preston, a health-seeker; and his sister Louise Preston. The village had been given more than a week to grow accustomed to them. Now their presence would pass without notice, and who would know that there were a couple of spares in the house? Particularly if said spares kept out of sight.

SPLIT-LIP hadn't put all his eggs in one basket, either. The fog had gummed things up a bit, but Gimlet-eye Prucon was a whiz with a car. He had made it to the Canadian border, crossed at a convenient spot where customhouses were conspicuous by their absence, and now was safe in a cabin at an isolated spot along the bank of the St. Lawrence River, south of Montreal.

Gimlet-eye—he was the man who had been with Split-lip in the Club Moderne—had the girl with him. He also had three other members of the gang, including Left-hook Annie, with him to keep the girl in order. And she shouldn't be much trouble—particularly not with Left-hook Annie around.

Lovalt had gone through with it. . . . Split-lip's eyes darkened. Good thing for him he had! That was the only reason he was alive today.

Lovalt had telephoned the girl, telling her that he was in great trouble, and asking her to sneak out and meet him about half a mile from the camp. The terror in his voice had helped put it over. She'd asked no questions, but had done as she was told.

That had made the snatch a pipe. The fog had been made to order. The twist had let out one awful yell, but there had been only a lot of pine trees and maybe a deer or two to hear her. A clout on the beezer had shut her up, and a little adhesive tape was insurance against more of the same.

Lovalt had developed a little starch in his spine when he saw he and the twist were going different ways. The clout *he* got had a little more on it. He hadn't showed the slightest interest in anything until some time after he had been tossed into a room almost directly over the one in which Split-lip was sitting.

Now he was welcome to do whatever he thought would help him. The room

was dark, soundproof, and about as hard to enter, or leave, as the vault of a bank.

Split-lip rather hoped that the crooner would try to get out of that room. He licked his lips in cruel anticipation. He hated Lovalt, hated him with all the intensity of his warped soul. The singer, with the same handicap this man had shared, had been able to achieve success in the world of honest men. As a failure, or a fellow lawbreaker, Split-lip would have passed him by with a careless shrug of the shoulders. As a success, he became an irresistible target, at which this man must shoot his venom.

The gangster stood up, and rubbed his hands together. Come to think of it, he had nothing to do right now, and he was bored. Why not give the so-and-so a workout?

He made his way to the second floor, produced a key and unlocked a massive door. Graveyard, in addition to his other accomplishments, was a skilled carpenter. The door was his creation. So, also, were the heavy shutters that guarded the windows.

Split-lip, standing just inside the room, closed and locked the door behind him. His eyes grew accustomed to the semi-darkness. In a far corner of the room, which was entirely bare of furniture, the crooner sat on the floor. He looked up at his captor.

"Where is Miss Marport?"

"How are your folks?" parried Split-lip.

"They'll get you for this," cried Lovalt. "They'll lay off you until they pay over what you want, and get the girl back. Then they'll come after you. And those boys get what they go after."

Split-lip's face was distorted with hate.

"Wise guy, aint you? Got it all doped out! Me, I read the papers too. The slip-up is when the person that was snatched comes back. They talk, and spill things that give those birds something to get started on. I got that covered." He paused to give emphasis to the words that were to follow. "The dame aint coming back!" He walked over and gave the man on the floor a savage kick. "Neither are you, you louse!"

THE airplane settled down to a perfect landing, discharged two passengers, and took to the air again. The two men who had alighted walked toward two men in uniform.

"My name is Ashby." The tall, thin, aristocratic-looking young man smiled,

and extended his hand. Tiny David grasped it.

"David is the name," said the trooper.

Special Agent James Ashby indicated his companion:

"Carl Sherman, head of our laboratory." Ashby's smile was contagious. "He does all my thinking."

There was a twinkle in the eyes of the man with the studious face, and his heavy glasses failed to hide it.

The second man in uniform stepped forward.

"Jim Crosby," Tiny David explained. "They send him along to keep me out of trouble."

They made their way toward an automobile.

"The barracks, first stop," said Tiny David as he seated himself behind the wheel. "Captain Field wants to meet you."

Ashby, sitting beside him, looked around with interest.

"This is nice country." His tone was casual. "Was it far from here where you rode in during a blizzard and saved those people from insane convicts? We read the papers, you know."

"We read the papers too," Tiny David countered. "I surely was tickled when I heard you were coming on this job."

Ashby chuckled. "Be truthful, Lieutenant—I happen to know you asked the Director to assign me to this case."

Tiny David's ears were red. "The name is Tiny," he muttered. "People only use my title when they're sore at me."

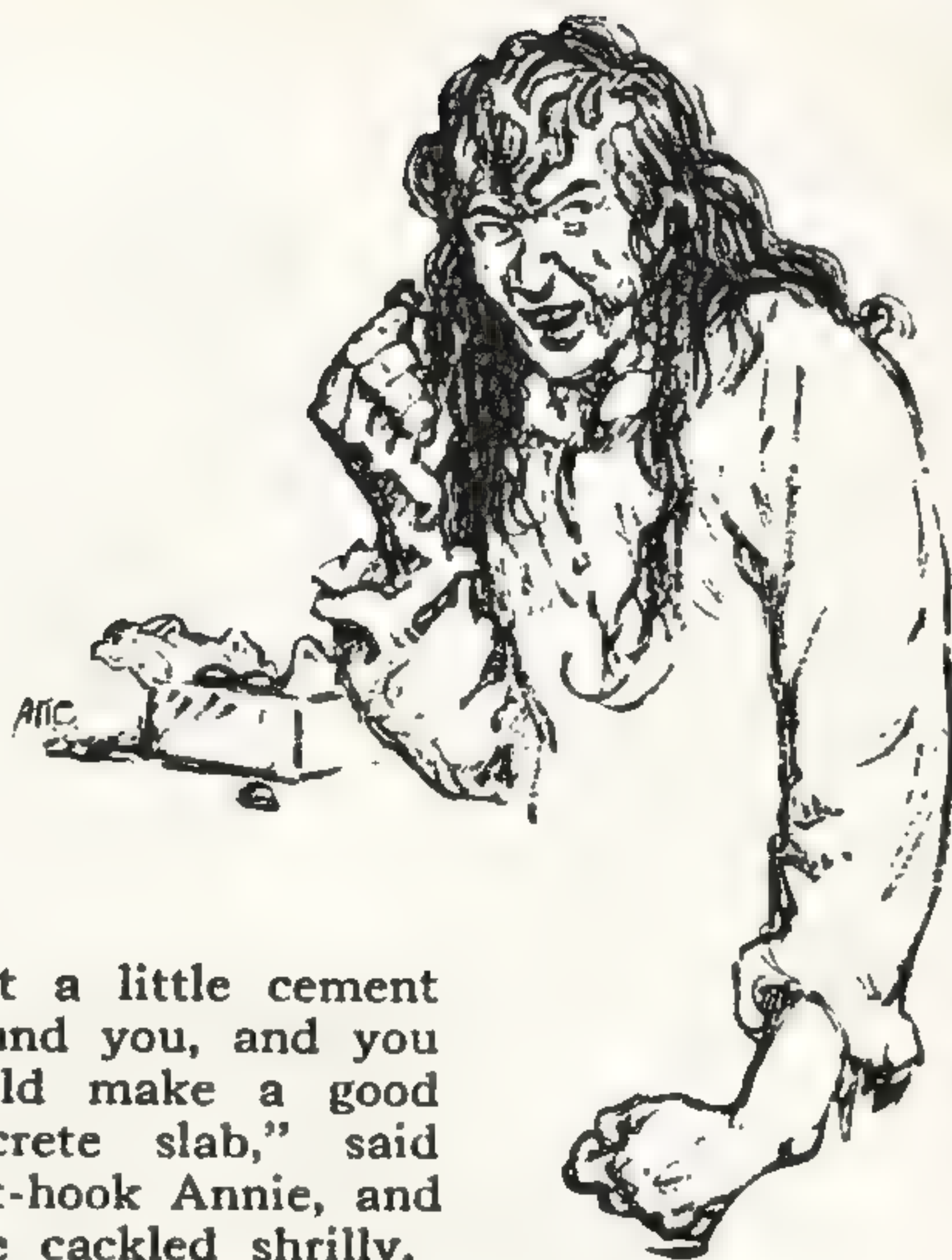
"Good enough," said the special agent. "They call me Duke."

The stop at the barracks was brief. Captain Charles Field, the commanding officer, met them before the building. There were hurried introductions.

"You will want to get right over to the Marport camp," Captain Field explained. "What looks like a ransom letter has arrived."

During the first part of that ride, Duke Ashby sat clutching the seat. Gradually his nervousness vanished. This big man at the wheel knew his business. He negotiated narrow and winding mountain roads at a speed that was more than swift for an express highway. He drove the small troop-car with expert skill.

Although he made no comment, the special agent was sorry the ransom letter had turned up before their arrival. Properly handled, that letter might furnish valuable leads.



"Put a little cement around you, and you would make a good concrete slab," said Left-hook Annie, and she cackled shrilly.

They drew up before the Marport camp, and an efficient-looking man in the uniform of a sergeant greeted them.

"Sergeant John King," Tiny David explained. "Sergeant King is head of what we call our Scotland Yard unit."

Ashby concealed a smile. It was a standing joke with the Department of Justice that the New York State Police, seeking a name for their newly formed unit of investigation, had gone abroad, calmly ignoring what is undoubtedly the greatest law-enforcement agency in the world. But there was no added cause for mirth as King explained what had happened:

"The letter arrived about an hour ago. I took all the mail from the postman, spread it out on a cloth, and had Mr. Marport pick out all that he recognized without touching any of it." He smiled. "There are no prints of mine on this letter. I have the prints of the postman. I also sent Sergeant Linton over to the village, and he obtained the prints of the clerk who sorted the mail. After eliminating those, anything else we find on the envelope will be either postal employees at the other end—or our man. This helps to narrow it down."

He walked toward the house.

"The letter may not be anything, but it has all the earmarks. The address is crudely printed in pencil. I didn't open it, you know. Thought it best to leave that for you."

Ashby's eyes paid him a silent tribute.

"That is Mr. Sherman's meat," the special agent explained.

Inside the house, the scientist went to work. He dusted the envelope with a

fine black powder. He shook it. The powder slid off, but some remained.

Only two partial sets of fingerprints were visible. One set checked with those of the clerk who had sorted the mail; the others did not correspond with those King had placed at the side of the expert.

Carl Sherman shook his head.

"The postman didn't handle that letter. And I am betting the other prints were made by a clerk at the other end. Our lad is clever, and wore gloves. Well, we'll try the letter."

He opened the envelope, and removed the paper with tweezers. They bent over it. The message was spelled out in the same crude lettering:

WE HAVE THE GIRL AND THE CROONER. IT WILL COST YOU \$100,000 TO GET THE GIRL BACK. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO DO BUSINESS PUT A PERSONAL IN THE NORTH COUNTY BULLETIN READING, "JOHN IS BETTER." THEN YOU WILL RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS WHAT TO DO. IF YOU DOUBLE-CROSS US, THE GIRL'S LIFE ISN'T WORTH A NICKEL.

Again Carl Sherman went to work. Soon he shook his head in disappointment.

"Not a print. Our man wore gloves, all right. Put wax on what we got from the envelope, and we'll rush it to the Bureau of Identification. But I'm not counting on anything from that."

He turned his attention to the envelope, examining the postmark.

"New York City. Interesting!"

Tiny David, peering over his shoulder, saw the date and the time.

"That letter was mailed in New York yesterday morning at nine o'clock," he cried. "The men who took the girl couldn't have been there at that time."

He launched into a rapid description of the crime, explaining about the dense fog, and the checks that had been made.

"Exactly, Lieutenant," came the quiet voice of Carl Sherman. "The letter was prepared in advance, and mailed by a confederate. It is intended to draw us to New York. We'll have our field office there make a check, as a matter of routine. But we stay here. This is where the game will be played."

He removed his glasses. "Will Mr. Marport agree to our plans?"

"He will do anything we suggest, Mr. Sherman," said Tiny David.

"Good. Where is this newspaper they mention in the letter?"

The trooper explained that it was a daily published in the town in which the barracks were located.

"Very well. We'll have a personal inserted in tomorrow's issue. How does your outfit stand with the telephone and telegraph people up here?"

"We are on the best of terms," the trooper asserted.

Carl Sherman's eyes blinked.

"Think you can arrange it so that we can get a complete file from all the telegraph-offices within a range of fifty miles for a period of twenty-four hours after this notice appears? I'm particularly interested in messages to New York."

"They will help us in every possible way," Tiny David promised.

"Very well. And do you suppose the telephone exchanges will give us a hand? It's against the law to listen in on conversations, but if they would give considerable supervision to all New York calls, and make notes, even on what sounds trivial to them, it might help a lot. I'd also like a list of the New York numbers called. And they might watch incoming calls from New York."

Lieutenant David nodded assent.

"I'll go right to the manager of this district. When he knows what we are trying to do, he'll go the limit for us."

Carl Sherman leaned back with a smile of satisfaction.

"If there were more Black Horse Troops scattered about the country," he declared, "our job would be considerably easier." His fine face puckered in a thoughtful frown. "This will be just a wild guess. However—we'll assume that you have pulled this job, Lieutenant: You can't hide in the woods, because you have to keep near means of communication, and you will be too conspicuous coming in and out of the woods. In fact, any stranger is conspicuous in the woods. That means you will have to stick to some fairly large town. Which town would you select, Lieutenant?"

Tiny David thought only a moment.

"Canaras Lake," he answered. "It is a health resort. City people, rather than natives, predominate. It has a shifting population. I believe it is more cosmopolitan than any other place the same size in the country."

CARL SHERMAN'S eyes were gleaming. Duke Ashby was tense.

"I think you've hit the nail on the head, Lieutenant," said the laboratory

chief. "Fortune will be here tonight. Tomorrow morning we will put him to work at his old trade in Canaras Lake."

He turned to the troopers with an explanation:

"Fortune is one of our young hopefuls. He has everything, and we all love him. At one time in his rather checkered career, he did considerable house-to-house selling." Carl Sherman's keen eyes twinkled. "Tomorrow morning the good people of Canaras Lake will have a chance to help him earn his way through college by subscribing to various magazines. You never know your luck," he concluded.

UNLIKE Sexy Lou, Left-hook Annie could not claim her position in gangdom had been earned by feminine charm and beauty. Left-hook was a raw-boned person, with arms which were much too long for her body, and resembled grotesque hooks. The angular lines of her face were not softened by her buck teeth or her cold eyes.

Nevertheless, Left-hook had certain feminine traits. One of these was her habit, whenever the circumstances permitted, of slipping into a loose dressing-gown, a doubtful garment that was a cross between a linen duster and a robe such as is worn by a fighter on his entrance to the ring.

This garment, which Left-hook had donned for this occasion, had two advantages. It was comfortable, and its owner had reached an age where that was an item to be considered. Furthermore, it gave to the arms of its wearer a considerable amount of freedom. That freedom was very important, particularly in event the lady should be called upon to deliver one of the punches which had won her her name.

Another of Left-hook's feminine traits was her inordinate love for chocolate candy of the more expensive sort. The open box at her elbow was a concession to that craving. All afternoon Left-hook sat in the living-room of a cabin on the shores of the St. Lawrence River and nibbled on the candy. She varied this pastime by casting an appraising glance at the other occupant of the room, and flexing the muscles of her hitting arm.

Mildred Marport, sitting in a far corner, eyed her captor. Despite her youthful folly, she was a clever girl. She recognized the deadly qualities of the woman nibbling on the candy. She realized, without fully sensing the ex-

planation, that she had more to fear from this hag than from the trigger-fingered members of the mob.

A more mature observer than Mildred Marport would have realized that Left-hook, in common with many women who have been denied beauty and other feminine charms, hated every woman who possessed what she could never have. Mildred Marport, however, was quite content to realize that this woman was dangerous. But she had courage, this girl who was the heiress to millions.

"What have they done to Harry Lovalt?" she demanded.

Left-hook emitted a shrill cackle. "Dearie, by this time they have chopped him up and used him for bait."

Mildred Marport struggled to control the fear and revulsion that swept over her. But Left-hook, an artist in refined cruelty, saw that the sally had scored, and she followed it up.

"He did have a fairly good head," she admitted. "The boys might keep that, and have it mounted."

Habit is not lightly overcome, and some of the arrogance that is bred by years in which money has gratified every whim, came to the rescue of Mildred Marport.

"How much do they want to let him go?"

Again a shrill cackle came from the hag munching on the chocolates.

"Dearie, until you climb up to the age that takes you out of the jail-bait class, you aint got the price of step-ins. Your pa aint putting out to get no crooner back. The old so-and-so is more likely to slip us some sugar for taking him off his hands." Her smile was a horrible thing. "The only thing we gets out of that pansy is what he brings f.o.b. at the door of the glue factory."

MILDRED MARPORT swallowed twice. "What are they going to do with me?" she asked.

"You?" Left-hook put a half-eaten chocolate aside for future reference. Here was a chance to indulge an appetite even greater than her desire for sweets. "Dearie, in your case there is more to this, as the doctor said when the third quintuplet was born. You got considerable trade-in value."

The girl seized upon the straw. "My father will pay you well."

Left-hook nodded. "Well enough," she admitted. The horrible smile returned to her face. "Until the cash is in the till,



"Write what I tell you," Split-lip ordered—and Mildred Marport obeyed.

this is your address; but you aint going to get no mail or have no callers. Your pa might want a little proof, such as your prints, or having you write him a little note. We keep you on tap—ready to oblige."

Mildred Marport relaxed a trifle. The threats about what they would do to Harry were bluff, designed to keep her submissive. Even desperate criminals would not care to add murder to their crimes for no good reason. Her father would pay any sum that they demanded. Once the ransom was paid, she would be returned.

Confidence returned to the girl. She recalled stories she had read. The officials would bide their time until she was safe. Then the man-hunt would be on. She must be ready to give them every bit of help she could.

This house, she was sure, was somewhere in Canada, for the river near it was too broad to be anything but the St. Lawrence. The topography and the vegetation suggested that it was somewhere south of Montreal. There was a field of corn to the right of the house, which would be the north. The woman would be easy to describe. A description of the man would be harder. He belonged to rather a common type—you

saw a lot like him in the Times Square district. His one really distinguishing feature was his piercing eyes.

Left-hook Annie interrupted this train of thought with another of her shrill cackles.

"Dearie, it aint a bit of use cramming your head with that sort of dope. You aint going to get no chance to use it."

The girl recoiled. "What do you mean?"

The lady with the chocolates was in her element now:

"Them babies down in Washington has developed a teckneekey. They lays off until the bird what was snatched is back. Then they gets all the dope, and goes out to make their pinch."

Annie paused to do away with another chocolate.

"You got to meet teckneekey with teckneekey. If the person as is snatched don't get back, they aint got nothing to work on."

"That's—that's murder!" gasped the girl.

Left-hook Annie gave her attention to selecting a bit of candy.

"It is and it aint," she said at last. "To make a murder-rap stick, they got to have what they calls a corpus delectable. You, not being up on this stuff

like I is, wouldn't know what that means. But I'll explain."

Annie relished every word of this, and she went on in detail:

"Remember that case where a shark coughed up a guy's arm with a tattoo mark on it? They tried to hang a murder-rap on the guy last seen with the guy that matched the arm, who aint been seen since. The guy with the whiskers calls them out. He says they may have established a corpus, but there aint nothing delectable about it."

Left-hook Annie consumed two chocolates before continuing. This was to be her great moment.

"Same way here. Put a little cement around you—that would take those slut's curves offen you—and you would make a good concrete slab. Sink that slab in the river, and what have you got? You certainly aint got no corpus delectable." Left-hook smiled complacently. "Dearie, that's teckneekey."

The slattern glanced at her victim in order to savor her triumph to the fullest. Then she gave a sigh of disappointment.

Mildred Marport had fainted.

CARL SHERMAN, Special Agent Ashby and Lieutenant David conferred in the barracks of the Black Horse Troop. There were worried frowns upon the faces of the Federal men. The responsibility for human lives rested upon their shoulders.

Quite aside from their promises to Richard Marport, the plan of procedure of their own organization demanded that the safety of the victims in a kidnaping case be ever paramount. That imposed a terrific handicap upon them. They tried to mitigate that handicap, taking care to stay well within the bounds of their promises, and their orders. This was not an easy task, particularly when human lives hung in the balance on their decisions. They attempted to justify their steps to themselves as they went along.

"Change the personal a trifle," Ashby begged. "Give them the assurance they want, but ask for proof that Miss Marport is alive and well. That will give us more time to dig in. We may be able to stumble on something." His face became grim. "I'd be the last person to hint, even, at this in Mr. Marport's hearing—but I am afraid we need that proof in this case."

He saw that he had won his point with Sherman, so he picked up a pencil and wrote hastily:

John is better, but must have proof improvement is permanent. Have John write a note in own handwriting, and enclose it with additional instructions.

—Father.

Ashby waited until the two men had read the note. "How is that?" he asked.

Carl Sherman nodded assent.

Tiny David remained silent. He was an interested observer of all this. These men were master workmen. Long experience had taught them the best plan of procedure in cases like this. Every aid science could give them was available, waiting only for their call. Later, perhaps, there would be demand for the sort of police work in which he and his comrades excelled. That would be given willingly. In the meanwhile, he was content to stand by—and learn.

"Wait a minute." The command came from Carl Sherman. "We will slap still another personal in there." He wrote:

Dorothy is welcome home at any time, but must have proof she is willing to return. Have Dorothy write a note in own handwriting, and enclose it with additional instructions.

—Ajax.

Duke Ashby nodded understanding. Tiny David's face was expressionless.

"Can we get these in today's issue?" asked Sherman.

"Yes," answered the trooper. "They are holding for us, but if they get the copy within the next half hour, they can make the regular mail train. The reporter is waiting in the living-room."

"Will you ask him to come in?"

The reporter entered, obviously excited. He was young, and full of enthusiasm. He glanced at the two copies handed him, and a look of surprise crossed his face. He turned to the man he knew.

"Just what does this mean, Tiny?"

"Ask these gentlemen," said Tiny.

The quiet voice of Duke Ashby sounded even before the question could be framed:

"This is for publication, but you must give me your word of honor that you will publish it in the manner I give it to you."

The reporter nodded eagerly.

"You bet!" Awe crept into his voice.

"You are Duke Ashby, aren't you?"

Ashby smiled. "Not for publication," he parried. "Here is your story:

"You have learned—don't even intimate from what source—that Mr. Mar-

port has received two distinct demands for ransom for the safe return of his daughter. These demands obviously come from different sources. He is willing to do anything to bring about Miss Marport's safe return, but this new development has him frantic. The only course open to him is to demand proof in the form of a note written by his daughter. When that proof is forthcoming, he will at once comply with the terms of the source that furnishes the proof."

Ashby liked this young reporter. It was not pleasant to feed him deliberate falsehoods, but they were fighting human rats, and any method was justified. Later, when the danger was over, he would make it up to this eager youngster by seeing that he had every detail that was safe for publication.

"Gosh, what a yarn!" The exclamation came from the reporter. "You couldn't tell me how much ransom was demanded?"

"Each note demanded a different amount," said the special agent. He glanced at the clock.

"I do have to hurry," the reporter admitted. "Thanks a lot."

When they were alone, Ashby turned to the trooper.

"You realize what we are doing, Tiny: That justifies Mr. Marport's demand for proof that his daughter is alive and well before he complies with terms. It makes the fact that we have baited a trap less obvious. In fact, this would be a logical development. There is enough money at stake here to tempt any rival gang to try and cut in on the pay-off."

TINY DAVID nodded. "What about Harry Lovalt?" he asked.

Duke Ashby shrugged his shoulders.

"Frankly, Tiny, we don't know. It is easy to be cynical, and one plausible and obvious explanation is that Lovalt acted as the finger-man for this mob. But we aren't sure. Until we are sure, Lovalt gets the benefit of the doubt."

"That's about how I would play it," Tiny David admitted.

Carl Sherman turned toward him: "I wish you would do some more of the playing, young fellow. While it is very courteous of you to defer to us in every way, we'd prefer to have suggestions. We'd rather have you tell us we are wrong, and why."

"Right," agreed Duke Ashby.

"In fact," Carl Sherman continued, "the one thing we have that I have built

any hopes about, is your suggestion regarding Canaras Lake. It is more than a hunch. It is the logical place for their hide-out."

He leaned forward, his tapering, artistic fingers folded. His fine face was alight with enthusiasm.

"Tiny—I am going to call you that because I like you—let me tell you how much I bank on that suggestion of yours: Ordinarily, sending Fortune over there to see what he can find would be routine procedure. In this case, I don't regard it as that. That was why Fortune and I had a session that lasted for an hour before he left for there."

His eyes glowed with affection.

"Fortune is clever. If there is anything there to be found, he will find it. But he is young and enthusiastic. And his success over there, unless he does his job perfectly, can mean failure for us and grave danger to himself and two other persons."

SPECIAL AGENT BRUCE FORTUNE parked his battered roadster by the curb in the main street of Canaras Lake, and glanced about him. He looked a good five years younger than his actual age. His clothes were of a pattern favored by college boys. The illusion of youth was supported by his jaunty stride and his carefree whistle as he walked away from the car.

Under his arm were four or five of the most popular magazines. In his pockets were subscription order-blanks, and letters vouching for him as an accredited agent for the magazines, and also as a third-year student at Grenago University. As a matter of fact, he *had* been a third-year student there—four years ago.

Fortune had never been to Canaras Lake before, but thanks to a conference with Sergeant King, he made his way unerringly to the most likely residential district. There he went to work.

Front porches were popular places in Canaras Lake. They were filled with reclining chairs, which were occupied by patients. Fortune soon made himself welcome among them. He was an ingratiating youngster, and he was nothing if not adaptable. When he encountered kidding, he answered it in kind. Some of these patients welcomed any break in the monotony, and to them the youthful special agent was more than kind. He talked politics with one man, baseball with another, and discoursed learnedly on short-wave radio with a third. And

all the while, regardless of the trend of the conversation, he inserted deftly masked questions:

"Pretty soft for you people, with nothing to do all day . . . Yes, I guess it does get tiresome. But then, you see a lot of new faces. People coming and going all the time, aren't they? . . . You don't say so! Three new blondes and one new fellow in one house in the same day. Gosh! Which house was that? . . . So long! Me for the three new blondes."

That was a sample of it. He varied the conversation to fit the situation. A discussion of business conditions was used to bring about a question regarding local real-estate. Were rentals brisk? Many houses newly occupied?

He had all the time in the world, apparently. He did not neglect the magazine business. Quite a few orders were forthcoming. He accepted them gravely and thankfully, filling out the form and obtaining the required signature.

"No, don't give me any money. Wait until you get the bill."

Fortune worked with enthusiasm and suppressed excitement. There was something here to be found. Carl Sherman's careful instructions had convinced him of that. His feet ached, but they were forgotten. His voice became slightly hoarse, but he ignored it. . . . Morning gave way to afternoon. He snatched a sandwich at a restaurant, and returned to his task with his zeal unabated. The sun sank toward the peak of a mountain near by, and the shadows lengthened. The yellow sunlight was replaced by a pink glow. Still he stuck at his job.

"This will be the last for today," he told himself.

IT was a large boarding-house, near the end of a residential street, and the patients on the porch were preparing to leave for the evening meal. Fortune approached and began his sales-talk.

A man in the first chair closed a book.

"We don't want any magazines," he said, "but I know where you can sell some." His finger indicated a smaller cottage some distance beyond, almost in the shadow of a mountain. A lone man sat on the porch of that cottage.

"That chap just got in about a week ago," continued Fortune's informant. "Told me that he was lonely, and that he would like to have some magazines to read, but it was too much trouble to get money-orders to send in with the subscriptions."

The special agent thought he heard a subdued titter.

"That's a dirty trick, Don." The accusation came from a pretty girl sitting near the door. She addressed Fortune:

"Don't believe him. That man next door is Public Grouch Number One. He has a sister just as bad. They moved in about a week ago. We tried to make friends with them." Her face expressed mock dismay. "They would have none of us, my dear!"

She liked this youth with the magazines under his arm. She knew that selling anything from door-to-door must be a hard and thankless task, and her inherent kindness caused her to attempt to make this youth feel he was with friends.

"Don has a perverted sense of humor. I doubt if either of those people can read. All they do is sit around and stuff themselves. The delivery boy told me they order enough food for a family of five." Her laugh was clear as a bell. "Aren't I the gossip?"

FORTUNE'S heart raced. He forced a smile.

"If you are," he said, "I like gossips." He turned to the man called Don. "I owe you something for that bum steer." There was a note of challenge in his voice. "Bet you a dollar I can go over there and get Public Grouch Number One to sign on the dotted line."

The man laughed. "Done," he agreed. "I should give you odds."

The special agent whistled a dance tune as he approached the porch of the cottage. The man in the recliner was swathed in rugs, and the peak of his cap was pulled down over his eyes. His hollow cheeks indicated that he was just what he was supposed to be. But the words "moved in about a week ago" and "enough food for a family of five" were ringing in Fortune's ears. . . .

Graveyard Foltard was deep in thought. This was a hell of a racket, playing at being a lunger. He always drew the dirty end of the stick! The rest of the mob were taking it easy, while he was putting on his sitting act every day.

Split-lip and Lou were lallygagging around the house until it made a guy sick to his stomach. Had they fixed things so he could drag *his* woman along? They had not. Lou didn't like Diamond-tooth Bess. She wouldn't.

Bess had her moments, and he was willing to bet she could show Lou a thing or two, but in public she was refined.



Like that time she was dancing in the Purple Pup, and a big apple-knocker had stepped on her toes. Bess just gave him the icy eye and said: "If I wasn't a lady, I'd knock that goddam nose of yours so hard it would bounce on your back collar-button."

That showed class. It proved Bess had them all licked a mile. . . .

"Good evening."

Graveyard looked up, and saw a young man with magazines under his arm.

"Nothing like some good reading-matter to pass away the time," the salesman declared. "I have some magazines here I know you will be interested in. We are making some club offers that can't—"

"Scram!" Graveyard spoke out of the corner of his mouth. His head lifted as he uttered the command, enabling Fortune to get a good look at his face.

The special agent studied those features as he pawed through the magazines. He was forming a mental picture that would be used later when he went through the files of wanted men. He had only a few coincidences to base his belief upon, but he was sure he had found what Carl Sherman wanted.

Fortune selected a magazine from the bottom of the pile, and extended it toward the man in the chair. On the face of the special agent there was a disarming smile, but the periodical was so close to the prospective customer's face that he was forced to take some action.

"Now this is the magazine that you—"

Graveyard seized the magazine, tore it from Fortune's grasp, and dashed it to the floor of the porch.

The special agent had a crestfallen look as he rescued it. He placed the magazine in the pocket of his coat, keeping it separate from the other periodicals.

"If that is the way you feel about it," he said, "I am sorry I troubled you."

Graveyard's reply was halted as the door of the cottage opened. Sexy Lou appeared, with her very best come-hither smile on her doll-like face. Her finger conveyed an arch rebuke to the man in the reclining chair.

"Grav—my brother aint quite like himself since the bugs started working on him. You got any movin'-pitcher books?"

"You bet I have," Fortune replied.

He selected a magazine with the picture of a screen star on the cover, and produced an order-blank.

Lou showed mild annoyance.

"Oh, I got to sign something, have I? Well, come on in while I get my glasses. For all I know, you might be asking me to sign a paper statin' that I wasn't a good girl."

Special Agent Fortune hesitated for just the fraction of a minute. He had a strong presentiment of danger, which was increased by the knowledge that he was unarmed. But outweighing his fear was memory of the orders he had received:

"Above everything else, do nothing to make them suspect we are closing in. I would rather have you fail completely than have that happen."

There was no logical reason why he should refuse to enter the cottage. He summoned a smile, and answered:

"You couldn't make me believe that, no matter what you signed."

Then he stepped across the threshold, and the door closed behind him.

Back on the porch of the boarding-house, the patients tittered.

"You lose, Don," called one of the men.

A gong sounded, and they made their way to the dining-room. Only the girl who had befriended the magazine salesman remained. She sat staring at the cottage. Soon the man in the reclining chair rose and went inside. . . . With a final glance at the vacant porch, the girl made her way to the dining-room.

DUKE ASHBY and Tiny David sat in the office of Captain Field, filling in the hour before they retired for the night, by swapping yarns.

"Have either of you heard from Fortune?"

Carl Sherman stood before them, his fine face showing worry.

They shook their heads. "He hasn't called in," said Tiny David.

Sherman showed even greater anxiety. "That isn't like Fortune."

Duke Ashby was on his feet. "Come on, Tiny. Round up some of your men. We're going to find him."

Carl Sherman remained in the office; his place was here. A gong boomed, and from the garage near by, came a muffled roar as cold motors came to life. David barked a few short orders. A shrill whine went up as the troop-cars darted off into the night.

Canaras Lake is exactly fifty miles from the barracks. The road is narrow, winding and poorly paved. They made it in forty-seven minutes. And when they found Fortune's empty roadster parked on the main street, a chill struck at their hearts.

"Three men together," Ashby ordered. "Take different streets in the residential section. Check every house. Find out if he was there, and at what time. Be on your toes for trouble. If nothing happens, meet here in an hour."

Ashby, David and Sergeant King worked together. It was close to midnight when they reached the boarding-house. The proprietor was angry about the disturbance.

"We have sick people here," she protested.

They stated their errand.

"Just a minute." The feminine voice came from a sleeping-porch near by. "I know where that man went."

Then the girl who had befriended the magazine salesman appeared, clad in a negligee. She told her story.

Ashby's eyes narrowed. "Let's go," he growled.

They scorned precautions as they made their way across the lawn and stood before the darkened cottage. Ashby produced a pass-key. The door swung open.

At the far side of the living-room, the rays from their flashlights picked out a form lying on the floor. Even before they bent over it, they knew what they would find. Special Agent Fortune, his features battered almost beyond recognition, had joined that gallant legion whose names are inscribed on a tablet in the Washington offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and whose memory should be cherished by this nation for all time.

Ashby was kneeling, a gun in his right hand, his left fist clenched. He looked at the mutilated face for a full moment.

The two troopers knew a pledge was being made that Bruce Fortune would be avenged. Sergeant King slipped out of his sheepskin-lined coat, and reverently covered the features of the still form.

Then they charged through the cottage in futile search. At length they came to a halt before a stout, barred door on the second floor.

Tiny David advanced to a window, sent his elbow crashing through the glass, and blew a blast upon his whistle. Shadowy forms came running down the street.

"Bring an ax!" he shouted.

THEY chopped through the door, and gained entrance. A second body was sprawled before them. They bent over it. Tiny David was the first to speak:

"I guess that clears Harry Lovalt. Poor devil!"

Duke Ashby nodded.

"It looks like it, Tiny." He produced a pocket kit, and proceeded to take the impressions of the dead crooner's fingers. "Just a matter of routine," he explained.

In one corner of the room they found a revolver. The butt was broken, and the slayer evidently had tossed the useless weapon aside. Ashby pounced upon it, and went to work.

"Gloves," he muttered a few minutes later. "Not a print." He thrust the weapon into his pocket. "The birds have flown. We will see what they've left."

Their painstaking search revealed nothing to help them. All the while, Ashby had been working. He examined the furniture, the woodwork, the walls and every conceivable place that a human hand might touch. Then he sniffed at the top of a table.



"Not a print," he repeated. "Just before they left, they went over everything with an oily rag. They're clever."

His voice was low:

"Fortune must have made some mistake. They got him. They killed Lovalt because he had no value to them, and he was a dangerous liability. They went away with the girl. I'm inclined to think she is safe for the present. They need her to establish proof that will persuade her father to pay over the ransom. When that need no longer exists—"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"We will question the girl next door, and get a description of the occupants of this dump. That may help."

He pulled the broken revolver from his pocket, and examined it.

"Serial number filed off." Some of his confidence returned. "That won't help them." There was a gleam of hope in his eyes. "The sooner this gun gets to Washington, the better. Devlin, one of our pilots, is waiting at the airport near the barracks. I'll have somebody start for the airport with this gun, at once."

SPLIT-LIP CRANEL was at the wheel. Graveyard Foltard sat beside him. Sexy Lou and the baggage united to hold down the rear seat.

Mr. Cranel, in addition to driving, provided a steady monologue. Sprinkled with oaths, obscenity and abuse, this dissertation contrasted the brilliance of Mr. Cranel with the stupidity of Mr. Foltard.

"Of all the dumb so-and-so's, you rate tops. I smelled F. B. I. on that guy before he hit the porch. Then he hands you the book, and that was the tip-off. He wanted your prints! And what do you do? You play sucker and grab for it—like a broad in a floor show would go for rock!"

Split-lip paused for breath.

"And what do I do? I send Lou out to draw the so-and-so in the house, and it is something to write home about that you didn't queer that." The gangster's upper lip was drawn back in a snarl, and it revealed the hideous scar usually hidden by the trim mustache. "I scrapped two deadheads. I should've wrapped you up in the same package, and we'd've had a set."

Mr. Foltard sighed wearily. He had a growing conviction that his usefulness with this particular outfit was ended. He had no illusions about taking his talents elsewhere. Gangland has an inexorable rule regarding deadwood. . . .

Mr. Cranel halted the car before a village store that had a newspaper-rack.

"Duck in and get a today's *Bulletin*," he ordered Lou.

They were well outside the village when the car stopped again. Making use of the light from the instrument panel, Split-lip perused the classified advertisements. The first personal caused him to utter a cluck of satisfaction. The second brought an oath to his lips. He turned to the front page.

The lead story enlightened him.

"The dirty chisellers! Well, we got the goods. They aint. It will take longer, but we got plenty of time. I don't know an easier way to make a hundred grand."

The car rushed on through the night. Split-lip consulted a map, and crossed the Canadian border on a dirt road that was devoid of other traffic. Soon they halted before the house on the shore of the St. Lawrence.

Split-lip blew a signal on the horn. A light was snapped on in the house, and Left-hook Annie stood framed in the doorway. She wore a flannel nightdress, which was shapeless, and made her appear even less lovely. Her greeting was a hoarse cackle.

"Keeping late hours, aint you? Did you bring me any candy?"

The gangster ignored the question.

"Where's the girl?" he demanded.

The hag led the way to a room on the second floor, unlocked the door, and entered without knocking. Split-lip followed her.

MILDRED MARPORT, fully clad, jumped up from a couch. Her eyes were heavy from sleep, but she faced them defiantly.

"What d'you call your old man?" asked Split-lip.

"Dad."

"What does he call you? Any pet name?"

"Puss."

"Tell me anything that happened when you were a kid that you and your old man would remember."

She had been caught off-guard by the first two questions; but now, as she sensed his purpose, she attempted resistance.

"I'll tell you nothing."

The killer shrugged his shoulders.

"Go to work on her, Annie."

The slattern advanced, her left arm drawn back. A shriek of terror came from the girl.

"I'll—I'll tell you anything!" she cried. "One day, when I was about twelve, I refused to go to school. They called my father. Instead of scolding me, he said that a lot of other girls felt the same way about school, and that we would go and see some of them. We drove all over the city, visiting laundries, sweat-shops and all kinds of places where girls and women were working hard." She paused. "The next day I went back to school."

Split-lip nodded. He raised his voice:

"Lou, bring me that box of writing-stuff. It's in the big bag."

He put on the rubber gloves before he opened the box. Then he handed a sheet of paper and a pencil to the girl.

"Write what I tell you."

He walked about as he dictated:

"Dear Dad: I am well and they are kind to me, but for God's sake do what they say. Remember the time when I wouldn't go to school and you took me to see all the girls working hard? The sooner you do what these people say, the sooner your Puss will be back with you."

He lighted a cigarette.

"Write your full name below that," he ordered.

Mildred Marport obeyed.

Still wearing the gloves, the gangster took another sheet of paper and began to print a message:

THIS SHOULD PROVE TO YOU THAT WE HAVE THE GIRL. NOW WE MEAN BUSINESS. IF YOU DON'T COME ACROSS IT WILL BE JUST TOO BAD FOR YOUR DAUGHTER. PUT A PERSONAL IN THE BULLETIN READING, "PUSS. I AM SATISFIED. FATHER." AS SOON AS WE SEE IT WE WILL SEND YOU INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO PAY OVER THE MONEY. YOUR DAUGHTER WILL BE HOME 24 HOURS AFTER WE GET THE JACK. IF THERE IS ANY DOUBLE-CROSS SHE WON'T EVER BE HOME.

He folded the paper, placed it in an envelope, and addressed that to Richard Marport. He placed the sealed letter in another envelope, which he directed to a man in New York City.

"Get this in the mail the first thing in the morning," he ordered Annie. A satisfied smile crossed his sinister face. "We are sitting pretty," he declared. His insolent glance took in the smart perfection of Mildred Marport. "Nice," he admitted. "But only a sap would part with a hundred grand for her when the market price for real dames is two bucks."

The hoarse cackle of Left-hook Annie furnished applause for the insult. . . .

There was a stir of activity in the laboratories of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, in Washington. Long before day-break the pilot Devlin, bleary-eyed and a quivering mass of nerves after a battle with heavy fog, had placed a battered revolver before the Director, who had been living at his desk for two days and two nights.

Now men in white smocks were working their magic. The barrel of the revolver reposed in a pan of acid. They watched over it as a mother hen guards her chickens. And the Director was ever at their elbows.

THE serial number had been filed from the revolver-barrel. Split-lip Cranel thought that was smart business. He was so sure of its efficacy that he had carelessly tossed the weapon aside when it was no longer useful.

But these men had magic beyond Split-lip's knowledge. They knew that the steel in a revolver barrel is comparatively thin. The blows that cut the serial number in the steel also do damage to molecules beneath the level at which the number is visible. Those invisible cuts and bruises, naturally, bear the form of the die that inflicted them.

The acid bath served to irritate the injuries the molecules had suffered. The chemists waited the proper time, and drew the gun-barrel from the liquid. The rays of a powerful violet light were played upon it. The filed-off numbers became as plain as if they were written with a pen dipped in fire.

The Director called the numbers off as he jotted them down on a pad. He darted back to his office. There was a quick command. Soon the data was placed before him:

The revolver bearing that serial number had been stolen from an armory in Kansas City. The raid upon the armory was the work of one Split-lip Cranel and his gang. Soon the picture of Cranel and his record was on the desk before the Director.

The cross-index showed that the gang was composed of Gimlet-eye Prucon, Graveyard Foltard and several other lesser lights. Under another listing they discovered that the female associates of these gentlemen included Sexy Lou, Left-hook Annie, Diamond-tooth Bess and other strange ladies. Excellent likenesses of all these were added to the mass of material on the desk.

There were *modus-operandi* cards, which detailed the methods used by this gang. There were other cards, which recorded the tie-ups they had with underworld characters in various cities.

A clerk from the identification section placed more data before the Director. A search on the fingerprints of Harry Lovalt, the crooner, revealed that he had served a sentence of five years in San Jackin Prison on the Pacific Coast. The charge was grand larceny. His name at that time was Harry Bernold.

"That's interesting," murmured the Director.

He turned to the card devoted to Split-lip Cranel. That gentleman had enjoyed the hospitality of San Jackin at about the same period. The conviction was for blackmail.

"That clears up one mystery," mused the official. "Blackmailed into acting as a decoy—then killed."

His glance traveled down the card. Split-lip, the prison records showed, had not taken advantage of the ruling that allowed him one outgoing letter a month. His incoming mail, according to the records, all came from one source, one faithful correspondent, who was not discouraged by the fact that her letters remained unanswered. That faithful soul was Left-hook Annie. There was a notation on the record that her letters all bore the postmark of a small town in Canada.

There was a gleam in the eyes of the Director as he pushed a button.

"Get me a map of northern New York," he told the girl who answered. "I want one that shows the adjacent section of Canada."

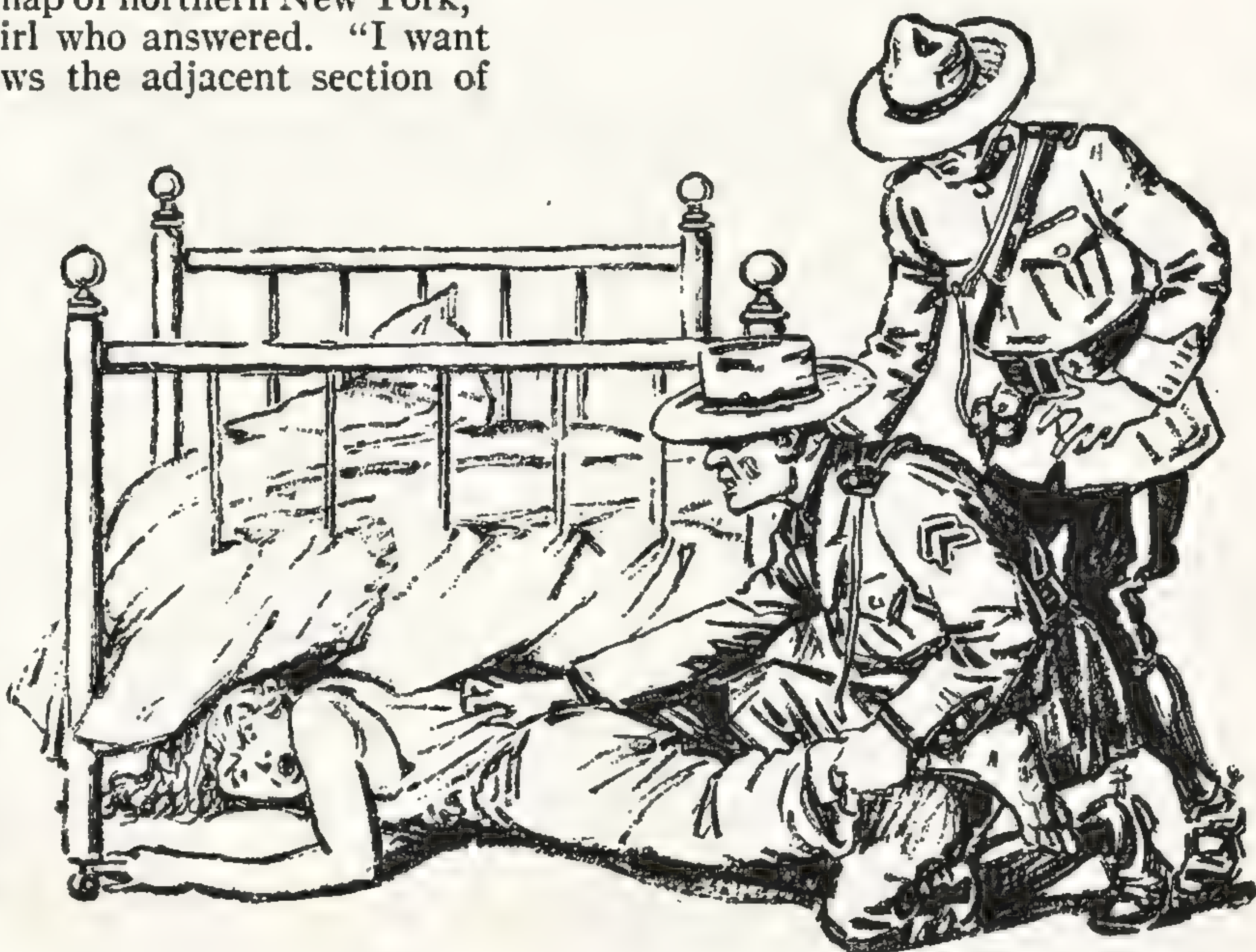
Soon it was placed before him, and he bent over it. He found Moon Lake. He noted the location of Canaras Lake. A long search was rewarded when he spotted the tiny Canadian town along the St. Lawrence. He held a pencil over the scale of the map, afterwards using it to determine the distance that separated the three points.

Then he leaned back, his face aglow with triumph. It was as plain as the flag hanging on the wall of his office. Here was the logical hide-out for the gang. It had been there all the time, ready and waiting.

The house in Canaras Lake had been a makeshift. At the worst, it would serve to confuse the search, and it made it possible to keep the crooner and the girl apart—which, from the standpoint of the kidnapers, was advisable. Carl Sherman had been right when he said that mailing the letters from New York was merely a blind to throw the searchers off the trail.

It was a ten-to-one shot that the girl had been taken directly to the house in Canada, that she had been there right along, and that she was there at the present time.

Then the look of elation vanished from his face. Mildred Marport was safe only as long as they thought she was needed to convince her father that paying the ransom would insure her safe return. The ruse that another gang was attempting to cut-in on the deal could be used only for a limited time. Once the limit



They found Sexy Lou under a bed, and pulled her out with scant ceremony. "Where is Mildred Marport?" they demanded.

of safety was passed, its continued use would sign the death-warrant of the girl.

The Director made a quick decision. "I would do the same thing if she were my own daughter," he murmured.

He picked up the telephone and called a high Canadian official. When he put the instrument aside, there was a warm glow about his heart.

"Mr. Director," the Canadian official had said, "send your men into Canada. Our men will be proud to work with them, and under their direction. Canada considers it an honor, sir, to render assistance to the United States Department of Justice."

The man at the desk gave the telephone number of the barracks of the Black Horse Troop to his private operator. When Carl Sherman's voice answered, he carefully and methodically outlined what the laboratory and the records had been able to contribute. He added his own deductions. He heard Sherman reply in agreement. There was a pause.

"Go in and get the rats, Carl!" His voice rang with emotion. "But for God's sake, be careful!"

SILENTLY and relentlessly a small army converged on the house on the shore of the St. Lawrence. There were special agents and troopers, and a detachment from the Royal Canadian Mounted, headed by an upstanding youngster who introduced himself as Inspector Geoffrey Howard.

They moved under the cover of darkness, just before the dawn. They were equipped with machine-guns and tear-gas—also axes.

Preliminary investigation had located the house, and also established the fact that it contained their quarry. Now they formed an invisible half-circle about the dwelling. The river was the axis of the circle, and that point was not unguarded, for out on the water, hidden by the mists, a police-boat rode at anchor.

Carl Sherman, a man of science, whom fate had snatched from his former pursuits and transformed into a man-hunter, had planned it all. There were two objectives: Special Agent Fortune must be avenged, and this gang wiped out. Mildred Marport must be rescued from the kidnapers—alive.

That last necessity complicated things. The capture must move with lightning speed. There must be no protracted siege, no lull during which these human rats, knowing their own end was close at

hand, would have time to perpetrate a final outrage.

Sherman had worked out such a plan. He had done it with a look of pain in his fine eyes, for he revolted against using men as pawns: he loved Duke Ashby as a brother; he had deep affection for the big man in the uniform of the New York State Police who had worked side by side with them in this case.

So, when the plan was completed, he had contented himself with merely outlining it to them without mentioning definite assignments. That, he told himself as the zero hour was close at hand, had been cowardice on his part, for he had known just what would happen. They had first asked, and then demanded that they be given the two most dangerous assignments.

That was why Duke Ashby and Tiny David were lying in a clump of bushes at the far end of the half-circle nearest to the darkened house. The half-light of early morning revealed the dwelling, bleak and sinister, with shuttered windows and a stout door reached by two wooden steps with no roof above them.

That door was their problem. They were certain it was protected by locks and bolts; yet they must cause it to swing open before the occupants of the house were aware what was happening. Once open, it must not be allowed to close.

They spoke very little, but their shoulders pressed against each other. Ashby



glanced at the luminous dial of his wrist-watch, and shrugged his shoulders. His hand found the hand of the man at his side.

"Here goes, Tiny!" he whispered.

"Duke!" The hoarse growl came from Tiny David. The single word contained a declaration of affection and a prayer.

Duke Ashby rose and walked slowly and calmly toward the door. In his left hand he held a yellow envelope.

The men watched breathlessly as he reached the wooden steps. A hard-boiled trooper used the hand not holding a gun to reach a lucky coin and make a fervent wish. A Mountie crossed himself and whispered a prayer. From between Inspector Howard's tightly compressed lips there issued an explosive and admiring, "Jove!" Carl Sherman watched the scene with the look of a man to whom all hope has been denied. Tiny David flexed the muscles of his long legs, preparatorily.

Ashby mounted the steps, and knocked on the door. The darkness was lifting, and they could see his face. The movement of his lips showed he was whistling.

They heard a commotion inside the house. A light was snapped on. The cackling voice of a woman carried to them, muffled by the heavy door:

"Whatcha want?"

Ashby's voice was unruffled:

"Telegram for you from New York."

Silence followed, and it seemed interminable.

"Wait a minute." It was the voice of the woman.

A key grated in a lock. There was a rasping sound as a bolt was withdrawn. Then came the clang of a chain being put into position. That sound caused a dead weight to settle about Ashby's heart.

The door swung open, little more than an inch, and held firmly in that position by the heavy chain.

"Pass it in," ordered Left-hook Annie.

DUKE ASHBY gritted his teeth, and thrust the fingers of one hand in through the narrow opening. He threw his weight against the door. It was a futile gesture. He knew that before he made it. But that door must remain open.

Left-hook Annie gave a shrill cry of alarm. She tried to close the door. The face of the special agent went white as the heavy wood crushed his fingers. Left-hook Annie swung into action. The butt of a sub-machine gun struck Ashby's hand. Acute nausea swept over him, but he held his fingers in the narrow opening.

His back was turned to the men in the ring about the house, and they were unable to see what was happening, but the position of Ashby's body told Carl Sherman the climax was at hand. The laboratory chief stood up and gave the signal.

As the men rushed forward, the shrill cackle of Left-hook Annie sounded above the din:

"Split-lip! Open the shutter, and knock off this so-and-so!"

Duke Ashby flattened himself against the wall. His hand remained in the opening. Annie kept pounding on it with the gun.

The line came surging forward. Mounties, troopers and special agents ran side by side. Stout curses and deep growls came from their mouths as they raced toward their goal. But seconds before they reached it, a shutter on the second floor swung open. The barrel of a machine-gun was pushed out. The gun was trained toward Duke Ashby.

A clump of bushes well in advance of the charging line had parted, and a man in the uniform of the New York State Police had leaped to his feet. Tiny David stood braced with his feet apart. His left hand was bent behind his back. The revolver in his right hand went into action.

IN a flash, Split-lip Cranel saw this new menace, and that the man presented an easy target. He ignored the oncoming line, and pointed his machine-gun away from Ashby and toward Tiny David.

The trooper remained standing, his position an invitation to the gunner. The revolver in his hand continued to throw lead toward the window. The cough of the machine-gun sounded. Something struck Tiny David's left shoulder with the force of a baseball bat. He shook his huge body as if to brush it off, and calmly fired the last shot in his revolver.

Now the line was ahead of Tiny David, and had reached Ashby. The handle of an ax replaced human flesh and bone as a wedge in the narrow opening between the door and the sill. Ashby, his face white, and his features contorted with pain, was supported by stout arms.

Tiny David was among them as they rained blows upon the door, and hacked at the chain holding it. They cut their way through. Left-hook Annie, a machine-gun cradled in her arms, fell back before their advance. There was a snarl on her hawklike face. She uttered a shrill cackle, and pulled the trigger of the gun.

A trooper staggered, then fell.

A volley of shots found their target, the slattern with the gun. She slumped to the floor, her face even in death pointed toward her hated enemy, the law.

Split-lip, Gimlet-eye and Graveyard fought it out from the top of the stairs. Two of their minor henchmen, who had been in a rear room on the first floor, surrendered without a struggle.

A veritable rain of lead drove the gangsters from the head of the stairs. The officers raced toward the second floor. Ashby, pale and uncertain on his feet, was at their head. His right arm hung at his side. His left hand held a revolver. Tiny David, the left shoulder of his gray coat discolored by a stain that was slowly spreading, charged along beside him.

Split-lip Cranel peered around a corner to take aim. Ashby's bullet caught him between the eyes.

"That was for Fortune!" murmured the special agent. He staggered, then dropped to his knees.

"All right, Duke," came the voice of Carl Sherman. "Rest."

Graveyard Foltard came forward, his arms above his head.

As Tiny David closed in on Gimlet-eye Prucon, the gangster's gun jammed. The trooper's big body enveloped the little man. Tiny David got up. Gimlet-eye did not.

They found Sexy Lou under a bed, and pulled her out with scant ceremony. Her blonde hair was sadly awry, with a dark growth visible at the roots. Her baby-doll face now was a grotesque mask of fright.

"Where is Mildred Marport?" they demanded.

Lou pointed toward a clothes-closet.

THEY threw the door open. Mildred Marport was huddled on the floor. She recoiled from them. Then, as recognition came, some of the horror left her eyes. When they helped her to her feet, she instinctively made her way to a man wearing the familiar uniform of the New York State Police.

"Easy, Miss Marport," said Tiny David. "Everything is all right."

A Mountie stepped forward.

"If it please the lieutenant, a very nice family live about half a mile down this road. I can take Miss Marport to them until we have mopped up a bit."

Tiny David nodded. A fierce flash of pain swept over him. He tried to move his left shoulder, and gave up the effort. He gazed at the spot on his coat with unbelieving eyes. "I—I guess I'm—"

"Tiny!" The cry came from Duke Ashby, who made his way along the hall by leaning weakly against the wall. "Tiny, you're hit!"

"Steady." It was the calm voice of Carl Sherman. His capable, sensitive fingers explored the left shoulder of the gray coat. "Nothing to worry about, Tiny." He produced a knife, and snipped at the cloth. "We'll see what we can do with that bleeding until we can get some expert help."

AN hour later two men sat on the shore of the St. Lawrence. Duke Ashby's right hand was in splints. The left sleeve of Tiny David's blouse was empty, and his arm rested in a sling.

"Duke, I—"

Duke Ashby smiled.

"It is hard to say in words, isn't it, Tiny? Let's not try!"

The man in gray nodded.

They both turned as Carl Sherman approached, a smile on his weary face.

"Just finished my telephone report to the Director. I think he was pleased. And now for a bit of proselyting. How would you like to come with us, Tiny?"

A slow, pleased smile crossed Tiny's face. Gruffness masked his emotion.

"I'll never have another invitation that will cause me as much pride. I'll never meet men I would rather work with than Duke Ashby and Carl Sherman."

He paused. His glance traveled across the St. Lawrence, and came to rest on the American shore. The blue peaks of the Adirondacks gleamed in the distance.

Carl Sherman asked quietly: "What is the 'but,' Tiny?"

Tiny David tried to explain.

"Over there,"—his blunt finger indicated northern New York,—"*is my country*. We've grown up with it, and I reckon it isn't too much conceit to say we've helped it grow in the way it should. We're rather proud of our outfit. We haven't the training you people have, and we haven't the technical equipment. But we try to do the best we can."

Embarrassment overcame him, and he sought to cover it with raillery.

"Here, I'm a big toad in a small puddle. With you, any number of smart youngsters could play rings around me. After all, I am just a journeyman cop."

Duke Ashby made a gesture of defeat.

"I guess I understand. We lose. New York State wins." Affection and mirth sparkled in his eyes. "But you aren't fooling me, you journeyman cop!"

ARMS and MEN

"FROM THE DEPTHS," like the other stories in this remarkable series, shows the coming of a new weapon to conquer the old in the wars of mankind—in this instance, the bayonet. Curiously enough, this "ring-dagger" was first used, it would seem, on shipboard.

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

MY visitor's name was Brodie. He was a stoutish man, a complete stranger to me; he proclaimed himself a deep-sea diver.

"I've been working for the past year on that English salvage job on the Spanish coast," he said diffidently. "Maybe you read about it: that treasure fleet that was sunk by Drake or somebody three hundred years ago."

"Oh! In Vigo Bay!" I exclaimed. "Yes, I read something about it a few months back. A ship was raised, wasn't it? A treasure ship?"

Brodie grinned. "Not that kind," he averred. "We got some hogsheads of rum out of her—my eye, that was rum! A couple hundred years old, anyhow. No, the vessel we got up slipped away and was gone. We blew open another that was on the bottom, and got a lot of stuff. Ships all around there, you know. Old hulks of all kinds. If we hadn't had so much trouble with the Spaniards, we'd have made a haul. As it was, we kept quiet about a lot of our findings; we'll go back next summer, maybe."

The matter was interesting; yet I was mystified as to the purpose of this visit. Brodie finally got around to it.

"Well, it's like this: I had a hot argument with the skipper. Carlson, you know, of the I.Q.S., the biggest salvage concern going. We'd been reading some of those yarns in Blue Book Magazine about Arms and Men. The skipper claimed they were fakes. I said they weren't—that some of those relics and so on were real. Now, I want you to do me a favor. I'm going to hand you something, and I want you to write a yarn about it that I can hit Carlson over the head with. We're going down to a Florida job next month, and we'll be there all winter. Will you do it?"

The request rather floored me, but Brodie took my hesitation for assent. He hauled out a foot-long package, and from it produced a fragment of steel—a pitted, rusted, wicked-looking sort of knife with two large rings at the lower end, and no haft whatever.

"I got this out of the junk and cleaned her up," he stated proudly. "The name of the craft that we blew open, by the way, was the *Licorne*. She was an old hulk, and no mistake. This is some kind of a knife. You're welcome to it, with my compliments; but don't forget to send me the story when you get it written."

The story? There was none that I could see, but I did not admit it.

I kept the knife to show my friend Martin Burnside, the famous collector of old weapons, who was on a trip to Mexico. A couple of weeks later, however, being in Kansas City, I was talking with Axel Johnson, the arms expert, and happened to mention Brodie's relic. He at once showed great interest, and I got the thing out of my trunk.

"The ship's name was *Licorne*?" he repeated with obvious excitement, as he examined the bit of steel. "Upon my word, this is positively amazing! You know, I have an old diary or day-book that will interest you in this connection. Take it along, and make the most of it; give it to Burnside if you like. I'd give a good deal to have this weapon myself, but one can't be a pig."

"Why, what is it?" I demanded.

"A bayonet; and if your diver's yarn is true, a whale of a bayonet! Until about 1678, when the first of this type was recorded, bayonets were simply knives with a plug of wood for a handle that could be rammed into a gun-barrel. Then—but why go over it? Read Mackay's diary and get the amazing story

Illustrated by
George Avison

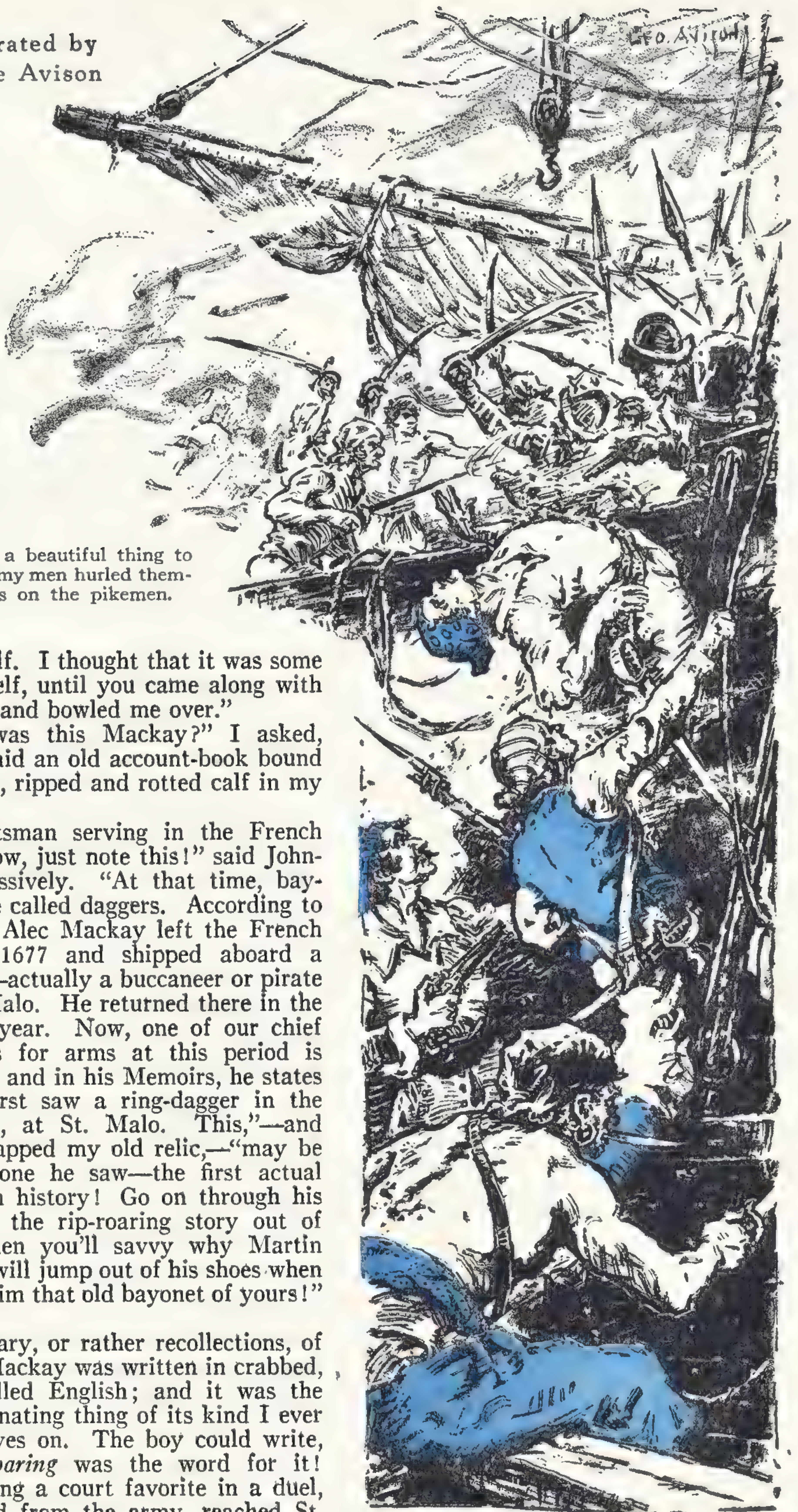
It was a beautiful thing to see, as my men hurled themselves on the pikemen.

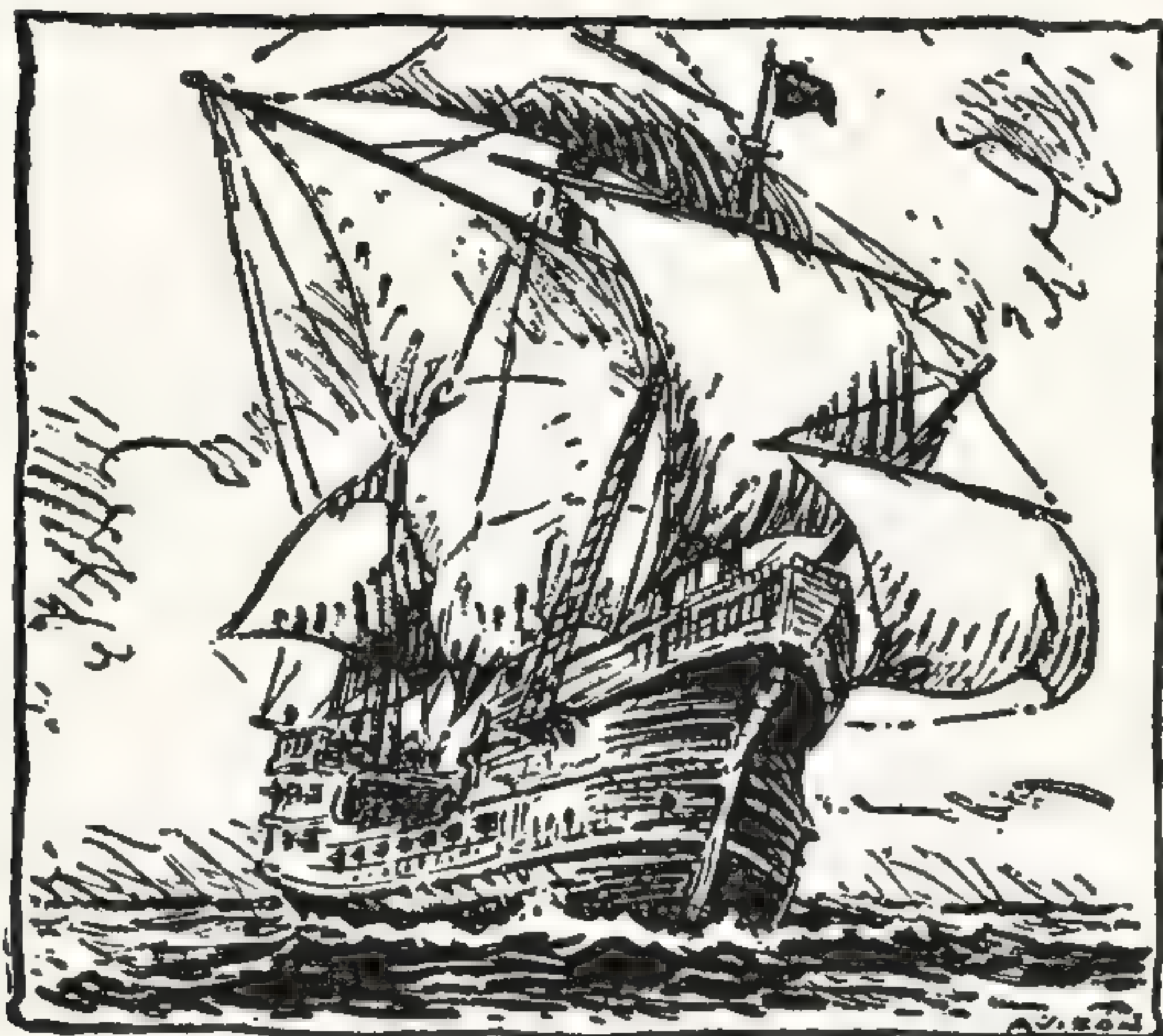
for yourself. I thought that it was some fake, myself, until you came along with this thing and bowled me over."

"Who was this Mackay?" I asked, when he laid an old account-book bound in cracked, ripped and rotted calf in my hand.

"A Scotsman serving in the French army. Now, just note this!" said Johnson impressively. "At that time, bayonets were called daggers. According to his diary, Alec Mackay left the French army in 1677 and shipped aboard a privateer—actually a buccaneer or pirate—in St. Malo. He returned there in the following year. Now, one of our chief authorities for arms at this period is Puysegur; and in his Memoirs, he states that he first saw a ring-dagger in the year 1678, at St. Malo. This,"—and Johnson tapped my old relic,—“may be the very one he saw—the first actual bayonet in history! Go on through his diary, get the rip-roaring story out of it, and then you'll savvy why Martin Burnside will jump out of his shoes when you give him that old bayonet of yours!"

THE diary, or rather recollections, of Alec Mackay was written in crabbed, badly spelled English; and it was the most fascinating thing of its kind I ever clapped eyes on. The boy could write, and *rip-roaring* was the word for it! After killing a court favorite in a duel, he skipped from the army, reached St.





Malo, and shipped with a privateer named Beauchene, familiarly known as the Ripper. Evidently Mackay was a gay wild blade of considerable fascination; for the second day out he killed Beauchene's lieutenant in a row, and was immediately elected to the vacant office himself.

However, his own words must tell this yarn; they are too good to miss, and paint the man and his environment with glowing accuracy. These Malouins, as the St. Malo men were known, were splendid seamen, bitter hard fighters, and rank pirates who stopped at nothing. If Mackay was new to the sea, he could at least hold his own among such a crew; but let him speak for himself.

THE Ripper (he says) was a deadly little man with bow legs and the greatest sea skill with a ship that ever I beheld. His favorite weapon was a Turkish saber, and you shall learn how he used it. We got on very well, though he damned me for a fine gentleman. We had thirty Malouins and a score of gallows-birds aboard, and the old lugger leaked like a sieve. Those gallows-birds were of all nations, and I took them in hand with intent to shape them to my own purpose. Worse scum was never seen.

Our armorer was a lusty rogue, who took to me because I could use the forge myself at a pinch. He was kept busy fashioning plug-daggers out of long Basque knives. The Ripper had heard about these weapons being used by the English, and had fetched along the gallows-birds to turn them into sea infantry—not a bad idea, but damnably executed, as we soon proved.

We got across the Biscay bay with the devil driving us close, and so sluggish

with the water gaining in our hold that the cursed lugger staggered as she drove. And then, as luck had it, we closed with a small Dutch barque in the Turkey trade. We had the heels of her despite our condition; and as we bore down, Beauchene called all hands into the waist.

"Leave the tarps on the guns, bullies," he ordered, with a grin on his face, blue and pitted with old powder-burns.

"You're crazy!" yelled the bo'sun. "We can rake her twice over!"

"Aye, and break her up," said the Ripper. "It's your vote, lads! The lugger's going down under us. Yonder's the very craft for us, and with loot into the bargain. It's win all or lose all. Take her with muskets and cold steel, or drown like rats. I'll guarantee to lay her aboard if you'll do the rest. Yes or no?"

There was a silence, and an exchange of looks. The chances were good that they could sink us or disable us before we reached them.

"Those Dutchmen can fight like devils," muttered somebody.

"True for you!" I said, with a laugh. "But they could never stand before angels, comrade! Here's to Beauchene's angels, and be damned to all Dutchmen!"

Beauchene's angels—well, it caught their fancy. There was a quick, hot yell of assent, and the Ripper went to the helm. How that powder-pocked devil could handle a ship! The Dutchman yawed and gave us one broadside, and after that never laid a gun on us, though she tried hard enough. The old lugger crawled up slow but sure, clinging to the blind spot in her wake like a leech.

They loosed on us with musketry. All hands below, the Ripper and I kept the helm, and by miracle neither of us was hit. Then we had her—up and under her counter, with the Malouins bursting out on deck and hurling grapnels, bullets whistling all around, men dying, and the two craft lurching and smashing together with blind shock.

I got my gallows-birds aboard, cleared the waist of the barque, and formed them up, plug-daggers in musket-muzzles. And at that moment the lines parted and the lugger fell away. I was alone here with less than half our crew, and threescore Dutchmen putting bullets into us.

We went at them with the cold steel. Egad, we had no choice! With the plug-daggers in place, we could not use our

muskets except as pikes, so we went to it like men, and died like devils and fought like angels.

They ringed us around and killed us one by one; still, we took shrewd toll of them. Eight of us were still living when there came a wild shock and a wilder yell. The lugger was grappled again, and up the red decks came Beauchene and the other Malouins.

A happy, ghastly sight was the Ripper for our sweating gaze. Shorter than most men, he used that curved blade of his like a demon, striking upward instead of down, and ripping with the point: An old Turkish trick used by the Janissaries, I've heard.

The stubborn Dutchmen had to be killed, all except the cabin boy and a craven wretch who hid under the captain's feather-bed. We hanged the craven and made the cabin boy drunk, watched our old lugger sink under the waves alongside, and hauled up for the Indies. The barque was named *Vorwärts*; but we rechristened her *Unicorn*, after a St. Malo tavern.

OUR water gave out; our provisions ran low; but by luck we met a dismasted St. Malo privateer under one Captain Grosjean. His crew right gladly came aboard us, but he demanded to be made lieutenant. The Ripper grinned and waved a hand at me.

"Settle it with Mackay, my dear Grosjean," said he. "He's a fine gentleman like yourself."

So he was, being a broken noble, and had an abominable long rapier and a fund of scurvy tricks to boot. We argued the matter a good fifteen minutes before I got my point into his kidney and closed the discussion. Poor fellow, we did our best for him; but he died three days later, babbling o' Versailles and cursing the Dutch schnapps which was the only liquor we had aboard.

This left us with a crowded ship—and an idea I took up with the Ripper.

"Your cursed plug-daggers ruined us when we got aboard with 'em," I said to him one night. "You might as well arm with pikes and be done with it, once the muskets are stoppered. And if we ever lay aboard a Spaniard, we'll find pikemen who know their business. But if we could contrive a dagger which would not plug up the musket—then, egad, it would be a different story."

"In that case, contrive it," said the Ripper. He was always generous when

drunk. "If it works, I'll give you an extra five shares of the profits of the voyage."

So, as we drove westward, I fell to work with the armorer, and between us we turned out a form of dagger which carried two iron rings. These slipped over the end of the musket, held the dagger firmly, yet kept it from interfering with the discharge. Captain Beauchene snorted at sight of it.

"Prove it, bully, prove it in a scrimmage!" said he skeptically. "An arm may be wonderful to look at, but no good in a fight."

No scrimmage offered. I went ahead and got fifty of the ring-daggers made, and drilled as many of the men in their use. Regarding this, I had my own ideas, at which the Ripper scoffed. Spanish pikes and halberds, quoth he, would put these shorter weapons to quick shame. Once a musket-dagger gripped a pike, the holder was helpless.

I bade him to the devil, and drilled on with my men.

Then the calms dropped on us, water and food running short, and a hundred and fifty men aboard. The sun blazed, and the sea was glass, day after day. What with dice and liquor and knife, we dropped a man or two overboard each day to the sharks.

The Ripper baited a huge hook with one corpse, and we took in a shark over twenty feet long. Did us no great good, however, for he had the previous day's corpses inside him, and sight of the cooked meat was too much for me.

"That comes of being a fine gentleman," scoffed the Ripper, with his mouth full.

There was drift if no wind, and plenty of it, from all directions; one day we were carried north, another south. On the seventh day, as we were drifting west, up swam a great hulk over the horizon, a Spaniard homeward bound. Hour after hour an east current carried her closer to us, until by sunset she lay but two miles or a trifle over, to the southward.

We had two boats. When darkness fell, the captain put them out.

"Row, bullies, for wealth and women! Lay Beauchene's angels aboard of her by the sunrise!"

ROW they did, all night long, the men spending themselves, changing crews each hour, while the phosphorescent water swirled in whitish flame. Dawn found

us close aboard her; but the Spaniard had boats out too. He slewed around until his guns came to bear, and let fly at us shrewdly, and came near to sinking us.

However, our gunner laid his pieces with cunning care, crammed them with bags of bullets, and let fire at the Spaniard's boats. These were sunk and riven so that our barque could crawl up under his high poop in the sunrise.

With that, I went below and broke out my handsome plum Genoa velvet and my Mechlin lace, and even my diamond buckles. When I had dressed and returned on deck, where a storm of musketry was sweeping down on us, Beauchene let out a roar of laughter.

"Now for the proof, ye mad devil!" sang he. "Here's the scrimmage, and you're dressed for it, so take it like the dancing-master you look!"

There was no time to bandy words, for we surged and crunched into her with our drift, a good share of us dead or dying already, and the carven rails above lined with helm and cuirass and musket-oon. Yet somehow the grapnels were flung and held, and somehow I got most of my fifty clambering up to her deck, while the others covered us with a swift hot fire from the *Unicorn* below.

THE Spaniards let us come—for it was a trap. Soldiers were homeward bound in her, and we found a full company of pikemen drawing up on either hand, to break us and scatter and kill us like rats.

However, my men came scrambling in over the rail and took rank; though some of them dropped to the musket-balls, they paraded with fair precision. A double rank of Spaniards were loading to fire, from behind the pikemen, but I gave the word first.

It was a beautiful thing to see. My men formed in two ranks as they ran up; they parted to right and left, hurled themselves on the pikemen, engaged the long pikes with the daggers—and then, at this close range, let fly with double-shotted muskets. The Spanish ranks were swept away as by a thunderbolt, and my men were in through the breaks with their daggers at work.

I myself accounted for two of their officers, who trusted more to the edge than to the point; then the Ripper and his Malouins were pouring in to finish the job. The Spaniards were broken; their officers were down; their ranks

were a massed mob; and in another five minutes the ship was ours and the prisoners flooding forward.

Having an eye on Beauchene, I followed him in a plunge for the stern cabins, where a terrified swarm of passengers were huddled. In the mass of them showed just one young face—and what a face! She stood alone with a servant. While the Ripper was gawking around for jewels, I shoved through to her side.

SHE was calm and proud and lovely, and when I met her eyes, the look in them brought a catch to the throat. I made her my best bow; luckily I had picked up Spanish in the Low Countries.

"Señora, I kiss your hands and feet," said I, thinking her some officer's wife. "Place yourself under my protection—quick about it!"

"Is your protection worth anything, then?" she exclaimed scornfully.

The others began to screech, for by now our men were bursting through to the cabins, and it was first come, first served. A brawny Bréton gunner hurled himself at my lady, and with a throaty yelp plucked her about the waist. At this, she cried out to me swiftly enough, in mortal panic.

The Bréton snarled and slit my plum jerkin with his dirk, but my point slit his gullet, which ended the dispute. I shoved the lady into a corner of the cabin and stood before her, until the worst of it should be past. Then the Ripper came up to us. His blue-pitted face shimmered from a dozen jeweled necklaces he had flung over his head, and his eyes flitted past me greedily.

"Splendid work, lieutenant! You've pinched the one pretty bird in the whole nest," he said, in foul slang that can only be approximated. "Now I'll take her off your hands while you go for the trinkets."

"Too bad!" I kicked the dead man sprawled on the deck. "The ship needs a navigator, and it'll be hard to spare you."

A glare came into his eyes, and he touched the pistol at his belt.

"What? You'd dispute me?"

"No: kill you. Or if you prefer, I'll turn back the five extra shares you owe me on the wager."

Thus we stood bickering, eye to eye, while around us the Malouins wrought havoc, and the women screamed upon saints who could not prevail against Beauchene's angels. Then a wild burst

of laughter came from the lass. She flung her arm about me and shook her finger at the Ripper, her black eyes aflash with frenetic merriment.

"Off with you, blue-gills!" she cried with a torrent of French billingsgate, and oaths as hot as I could lay tongue to myself. "Off! Or I'll have this honest gentleman cut away your ears to hang on my bedpost. Get out!"

Whether it was her wild laughter, her unsuspected and amazing French, or the hint of the dead Bréton at his feet, I know not; at all events, Captain Beauchene emitted one snort, and went about his business. I hurriedly backed the lady into a cabin, closed the door and stared at her. On the instant all her laughter faded in a sob.

"Out with it!" I exclaimed. "You're not the wife of some *caballero*?"

"Heaven forbid!" she answered, with a sudden pale and terrorized look in her lovely face. "They sent me to Spain to marry the Conde de Lucca—my mother was a French lady. I'd go through hell rather than to Spain—and I'm not brave at all—"

So befell hysterics, as the deuce would have it. She was in a chatter of fear, and with the tension gone, she went all to pieces in my arms. When I comforted her, she tried to slip a knife into me, then would have hurled herself from the cabin window. I had to clip her over the head and carry her senseless to my own cabin aboard the *Unicorn*, where I left her in security.

WHEN I saw her next, she was all radiant with smiles. We got on together famously; from the very first, we lived in a world apart, a jeweled and fantastic world all our own. Two days later, before we had finished looting the Spaniard, I had one of the friars aboard come and marry us.

From that day, I verily believe, the Ripper hated me because of Inez, and because of the way she had called me a gentleman to his face. He gave no hint of his hatred, however, and I largely ignored him. Then, when a gale came up, we let the Spaniard go its way, stripped.

A wife, so won? Aye; the worthiest of wives, and the noblest of women. She was no Amazon. Indeed, she could stand no sight of blood, and went white at a naked blade. If I pinned a rat to the deck with a knife, she could shriek murder. Which makes all the more marvelous what came later.



"Prove it in a scrimmage!" said Beauchene. "An arm may be wonderful to look at, but no good in a fight."

Since the ring-dagger of my invention had proved itself, I kept a round fifth of the men under continual drill with the weapon until they came close to perfection with it. Against swords or pikes it would do wonders, and in a scrimmage it was a sweet thing to see at work.

Not that it got a chance at once. Gale after gale swept us, but having great store of wine and food taken from the Spaniard, we cared little, going ever westward. We missed Hispaniola, bore up for Martinique and missed that, and sighted never a sail. The men, unable to have spending of the treasure below, formed a cabal against the Ripper and wanted to depose him, electing me captain. I soon put an end to this nonsense, but had small thanks for it, as will appear.

Then a hurricane took us up and whirled us for three days betwixt heaven and hell. Our rudder was smashed, our top-hamper carried away; and our mizzen, weakened by a Spanish shot, went over and killed or swept off a dozen men. We had sunk then and there but for Beauchene.

How the man suddenly stood out of that boozing, brawling, evil lump of clay! He was two days and nights on deck, with scant food and no sleep, and every minute of it laboring like a mad-

"Eye on the mark, Alec!" Inez lifted her voice at me. "Blue-gills is marked for you!"



man. Where we could scarce cling for bare life, he got the ship rigged again, and from the broken spars contrived a makeshift oar that would steer us after a fashion; and himself, naked and squat, was let down into the forehold to secure chain and anchor that was loose and driving holes in us. Aye, and stoppered the holes afterward.

The fair dawn broke, with the wind and waves tumbling us up the horizon to blue land—where, we knew not. Land we must have, to careen the ship, scrape her foul bottom, replace her rudder and renew our water. We drove down and could not help ourselves, until one of the Malouins descried the opening of a sheltered haven, with wharves and sheds along the shore and a little town, and a huge fort above.

THEN Inez, who had come on deck to gulp clean air, clapped hand to lips and choked back a cry, and stared from the shore to me like a woman in dream. Some one was waking the Ripper, asleep all this while.

"It's St. Jago!" she cried out. "St. Jago, at the end of Cuba, where the fleets touch for supplies and water the last thing before reaching out for Spain!

My father was stationed there; I was there two years. Look at the fort! Twenty great guns and three hundred soldiers there—"

"But no fleet!" said Beauchene, and roared out with laughter. "Ye hear that, my angels? Water and grub and rum, stores and spars and a new rudder—up wi' the Dutch flag! What's three hundred Spaniards to us, eh?"

We could not wear off the land, crippled as we were; so we made the best of it. The Ripper conferred with me for a little, then roared most of the crew below-decks and clapped on the hatches, leaving barely enough men to handle her. The squat little devil was in fine fettle that morning, for it was life or death on the toss. Spain was at peace with the Dutch, and this was our one chance of success.

"That fort could blow us out of the water," said he, rubbing his hands. "And mind the battery at the harbor entrance, Mackay! And the slave barracoons along under the fort—if we can pick up a hundred blacks and run 'em over to Le Cap, we'll double our loot! With a rudder and a wash-tub, I could make Le Cap from here easily, now that I know where we are."

The Ripper knew, at those words, how she had tricked him.



"Get for'ard," I told him. "And mind, I'm the captain."

He grinned and waddled off the poop, to get the anchors ready.

WE drove past the entrance and slap into the empty harbor. The little town was in a buzz. The fort and battery ran up flags; trumpets were shrilling, soldiers turning out, and a column was marching down to the wharves. Cuban shores were closed to all commerce in those days, but it was plain to be seen what a wreck we were.

I went below, and Inez helped trick me out in velvet and rapier. She was in white terror, warning me of cannon and soldiers and whatnot, until I kissed her and went up above as the anchor-chains rattled out.

So we came to rest, with never a gun showing, and a few men managing to furl the rent canvas. Under the fort where the slave barracoons extended, we could

see the blacks in chains, scores of them at work on a road. All the town had turned out to stare at us, and a small boat put off with an officer, who gave us a cautious hail. I doffed my hat and bowed full low.

"Señor," I replied, "this is the barque *Vorwärts* of Amsterdam."

"Know you not that all trade with New Spain is barred under penalty of death?"

"True, *caballero*," said I, with the proper lisping Castilian accent; "but I am not trading. We bear His Highness Prince Andreas of Hesse to the Havana, under letters of the Emperor, said letters being consigned to the Viceroy."

"Where are the letters?" asked the officer.

I bowed again. "His Highness bids your governor and chief officers to dine with him at high noon, when he may in person present his letters; and if it would please you to send us a few casks of

water at the same time, heaven will indubitably reward you."

The boat pulled hastily for the shore with this news, which created a huge stir. And since we were under the guns of fort and battery, no one suspected that this hodge-podge of royal names was not the truth.

As Inez had informed us, this fort and town lay at some distance from any other habitation in the island, upon which fact depended half the harebrained scheme. The barque was moored on spring cables, upon which depended the other half.

Half a dozen Malouins came to the poop, gayly attired in Spanish gauds; and Inez paraded on my arm, which helped the delusion mightily. Half a dozen casks of sweet water were sent aboard us, with a quantity of fresh fruits; and when noon approached, our guests hove in sight.

Full two hundred soldiers came marching down in serried ranks, escorting the governor and half a dozen officers. These put off in two oared barges, with much blowing of trumpets and waving of flags, and laid aboard us. I received them on deck and bowed them to the stern cabins—where, as each entered, he was promptly knocked on the head.

Up from below poured my ring-dagger men and over into one barge—Beauchene and fifty Malouins into the other. We flung the oarsmen overboard, took the oars and pulled for the shore. The bo'sun and gunner, with those who remained aboard, brought the barque around on her cable and back, ran out the guns, and began to pitch round-shot at the fort and battery, as fast as each broadside could be brought to bear.

MEANTIME, we were busy ashore. We were landed and at work before the Spaniards wakened to anything really amiss. The Ripper made for the fort full tilt, while I hurled my fifty at the ranks of the soldiers. These, being veteran pikemen, would have made short work of us had it not been for my combination of musket and dagger, which seemed to them an invention of the devil. Their ranks were shattered. With point and butt, as I had trained them, my angels fell to laboring mightily, and in five minutes the dons were in full flight.

Beauchene, meantime, gained the fort before the gates could be closed. Their officers gone, the defenders were at a loss for orders, and the Ripper straightway turned the place into a shambles.

Having nowhere else to flee, those put to flight by my men poured into the fort, with me after them, so that the interior of that place was a sea of blood and corpses before we had finished. Some of the Spaniards gained the savanna as fugitives; some stopped as prisoners; but most of them died there.

AS this victory was entirely due to my weapon and my men (of whom three were wounded and one spitted on a pike), they were transported with delight. Crowding about me, they proposed once more to depose Beauchene and make me captain. Like a fool, I laughed at them and sent them off to loot the town below, while I turned into the quarters of the governor to seek jewels and gauds for Inez.

While I was at this pleasant task, I heard a laugh—and turned about to see the Ripper with two of his Malouins, and the two held muskets leveled at me.

"Down sword, Mackay!" cried Beauchene, mirthfully enough. "So you'll plot to depose me, will you? Down with the blade, or stop hot lead!"

So, I shame to confess, they took me, and clapped irons on me, and laid me away in the prison of the fort. It was a dirty hot place, too, and had fleas.

While I lay there, the good captain sent rum to my men, who were looting the town, put his own partisans at the guns of the fort, and in short made himself secure. Also, he sent aboard the *Unicorn*, gave Inez a false message from me, and she came ashore.

Thus, after two hours of fleas and heat, I was hauled forth into the parade-ground, still littered with corpses and black with blood and flies. At one end was a massive post and chair, used by the Spaniards to garrote their victims. Near this, under a canvas awning, sat the Ripper with some shrinking Spanish women behind him—his men grouped around, and so much rum under his skin that his bluish features were red and swollen.

He leered at me as they seated me in the death-chair.

"Ha, my fine gentleman!" quoth he. "Here's the end of plots and treason for you. What would you do if you were in my shoes, eh? Come, speak out!"

"Refit the ship and make for Le Cap, then St. Malo," I said. At this, he roared with laughter.

"Aye, so you would! But not Beauchene, my bully! Here I am, and here

I stay, with my angels around me. A fort, a harbor, a battery—why, we can whip all the dons in New Spain! In six months we'll have a buccaneer fleet fit to take the Havana! But you'll be rotting where you belong."

At this, the Malouins blinked and eyed one another askance. They were no buccaneers; they had wives and families in St. Malo, and treasure in the barque yonder. This grandiose scheme of holding St. Jago as a base for piracy, liked them very ill.

However, at this moment Inez was brought up.

Beauchene came to his feet.

"Greetings, fair lady!" he said with a smirk. "You're about to see yourself made a widow, and again a bride, my dear. Here!" And stooping, he piled two or three of the stiffening corpses together. "A throne for you, my sweet! Come, prove a willing lass, and these women shall become your tiring-maids, and you shall rule the Indies!"

INEZ, white as death, flung one look around, rested her gaze on me for a moment, and had the whole situation in her mind. Then, to my astonishment, she flashed the Ripper a smile, and came toward him.

She trod the blood and bodies, while the blue flies rose in swarms, and with a laugh settled herself on the corpses beside him. He leaned over and pinched her ear.

"Why, there's a sweet!" he exclaimed. "Shalt give the word yourself to see him throttled—eh?"

She turned and looked up at him, then dipped her finger in the bloody dust and lifted it, and touched his hairy chest, drawing a cross there.

"No, my captain," she said, and laughed again. "You'd never expect me to mate with a coward, after having had a brave man? No, there's the coward's mark for all to see—a pleasant jest, eh? I don't blame you for fearing to stand before him, since it's well known that—"

Beauchene let out a roar and swelled himself like a crooning frog. It was wonderful to see how she led his mind to the thing.

"Afraid of that mincing popinjay—I?" he bellowed furiously. He caught at his curved scimitar and leaped from his armchair. "Turn him loose! Off with his chains! Give him one of those accursed weapons of his—the musket unloaded, mind. Quick!"

I caught the wide, clear gaze of Inez fastened on me, and blessed her quick wit as they doffed my irons and found me one of the muskets and a ring-dagger. I slipped it in place, and Beauchene waddled out to meet me, with a torrent of oaths.

"Eye on the mark, Alec!" Inez lifted her voice at me; and it was like a trumpet. "Blue-gills is marked for you!"

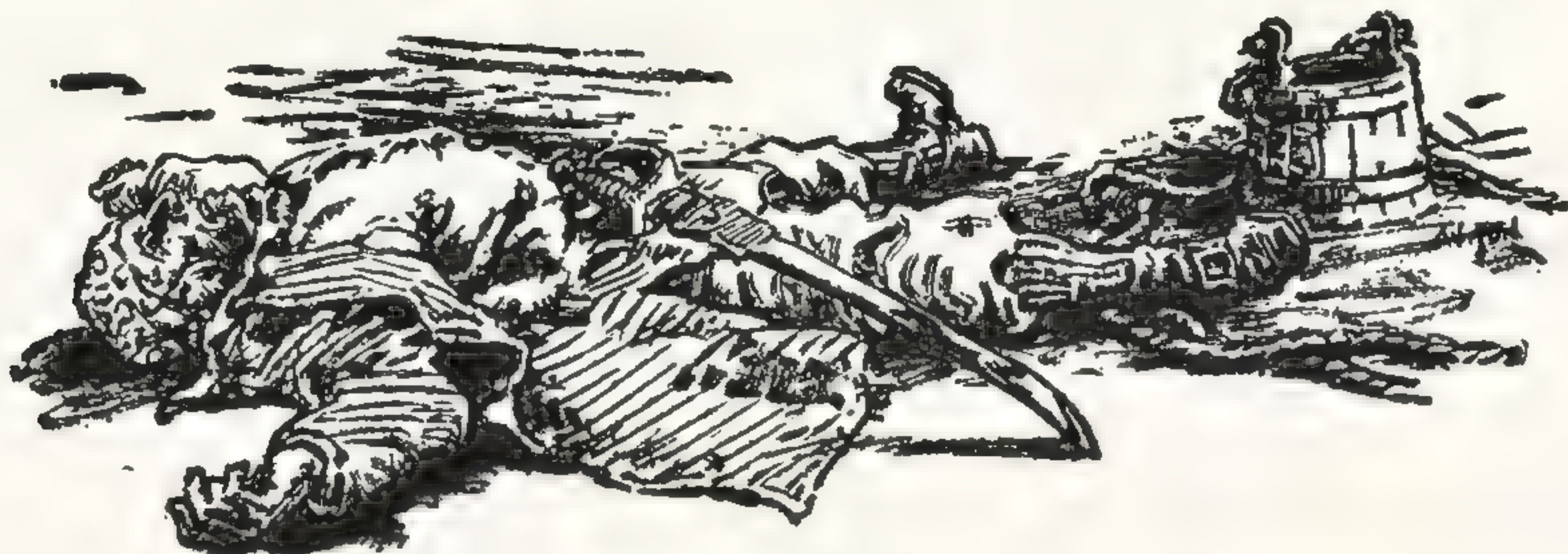
The Ripper knew, at those words, how she had tricked him. He rolled his bloodshot eyes at her with foul curses, but could not back out now. Then, swinging that curved blade of his, he came at me.

Had it not been for her words and his consequent blind fury, things might have gone badly; he was no slack devil in a fight, and I was stiff and weakened. But he lost his head—he aimed that undercut stroke of his to rip me up at the first go.

And that finished him. I parried neatly with the blade, swung the butt over and caught him with it square between the eyes, and he staggered. At this, I put the dagger slap into the bloody cross on his chest—and drove it home until the musket-muzzle rammed his breastbone. It was begun and ended, all in a moment of time.

I let him fall, with a crimson stream bubbling from his lips, and swung around at the staring, squinting men in the sunlight.

"Who's for St. Malo, lads?" I shouted. "St. Malo and St. Servan, the Sillion and the Grand Grave—loot to spend, and wives and children to kiss!"



ARMS AND MEN

There was a yell, and they came crowding around me in wild tumult of delight.

But when, pushing them aside, I looked about for Inez, she lay across the corpses in a dead faint. . . .

Such was the venture's end. We repaired the *Unicorn* and hauled out for Le Cap, where we picked up French pilots and so made St. Malo without further hap.

And I sit here at my ease in St. Malo as I write, while in the St. Servan basin the *Unicorn* is being made fit for the sea again, with a hundred Malouins to sail with me and seek further loot, and Inez decked in pearls and satins to forthfare with us, like a good angel!

THUS far Alec Mackay's story and Mackay's words, and the end of his tale of adventure, as it was written down in the spring of 1678 A. D.

As for his ring-dagger invention, he says nothing more of it.

When I laid the story, the old diary, and the bayonet from Vigo Bay before my friend Martin Burnside, he pondered the whole business with absorbed attention.

"Remarkable!" he exclaimed at length, peering up at me over his spectacles. "You know, lad, this fellow Beauchene actually existed. Lesage faked up his memoirs—one of the first novels ever written about America. The man, however, was real."

"Then you think the bayonet's worth having?"

"My boy, you wouldn't get it away again, except over my dead body! But as usual," and he chuckled delightedly, "you've missed the best point of the whole affair. What did you say the name of the wreck was?"

"Oh, that diver chap's wreck where the bayonet came from? It's in my notes—here you are. The *Licorne* was her name."

"Precisely." Martin Burnside beamed. "And if you'll look up the word, my young friend, you'll find that it's merely the French word for *Unicorn*. Too bad that diver didn't look around for Mackay's skull while he was about it—for that was certainly the ship in which Mackay left St. Malo!"

And so it probably was, when you stop to think of it.

"The Cardinal Smiles," another brilliant story in this great series, will be a feature of our next issue.

The Masked Marvel

Anyone who suffers under the delusion that wrestling is a slow sport will revise his opinion after reading this candid chronicle.

By EUSTACE
COCKRELL

I PUT down the letter from Lottie—feelin' low, because in same she says again that she will not marry me unless I quit rasslin' and return to the farm, as she does not think rasslin' is honorable. So to forget Lottie, I pick up the evening paper and turn to the sport page. And when I sees that the Masked Marvel has been rasslin' main events in Clark City for the last four Saturday nights, I get my big idea.

Now everyone in the racket knows that the Masked Marvel is Freddy Mark-soupolous, him being tattooed in a very distinctive fashion what with a big green snake bitin' a naked woman's head off on his left arm right above his elbow. For that matter, the public knows, too, that this masked marvel is Freddy, as Freddy has been around fifteen or twenty years and has rassled five times a week most of that time.

The story says that Freddy has throwed four "logical contenders" and that they are bringin' down Roland Romano, the champ, to rassle him at Clark City, and throw him and expose him, which will come as a surprise to no one but will fill the hall.

Naturally, the champion is gonna throw him because Freddy cannot make

Illustrated by
Henry Thiede



The Skipper he gives this tattooer two bits, and a check for the rest—which of course is rubber.

a decent face nor can he groan half as loud as a champion had ought to. So as I says before, when I seen that I get my big idea.

Now I am not one to brag, but I can throw Roland and Freddy one-two in the same night and never get a sweat up; but I aint allowed to do this, seein' as how I can't do nothin' but rassle, and have got no crowd-appeal whatever. You have got to get in the ring with some one to throw them, and on the occasions when I do rassle, it is usually against second-raters they are buildin' up, and I am given to understand that do I not lose as directed, I will not get my money nor no more matches nor nothing. So I lose, which is a poor-payin' business and very hard on my pride.

But it has come to me that do I win the championship, if I get in there with Roland and toss him, that it will be me that is sittin' in the driver's seat, because all the State commissions recognize him as holdin' the belt, and if I throw him, I am then the champ, and the next move is up to them; and before they can find

some one that can pin me on the square, I will cut some of the heavy dough the champion always cuts. And if I do say it myself, it will be some time before they find some one to put the lock on me in there levelin'.

So figurin' on this line, I calls up Skipper McGee, who has managed me off and on for some time now, and is right poorly satisfied with the job, because as I said I can't do nothin' but rassle—in spite of the fact that the Skipper has coached me by the hour on face-makin' and groanin' the last part, havin' got us the boot from two or three boardin'-houses, as the Skipper is a great groaner, and would no doubt be a box-office sensation except for the fact that he only weighs one-fifteen carryin' a flatiron and when eatin' regular, neither one of which things he does often.

WELL, I catch the Skipper at a very good time as he has lost thirty-four dollars playin' Kelly pool that very day, and give a marker to the gentleman he has lost it to, the same gentleman bein'



The crowd is hollerin' somethin' fierce, and the referee is down beside us stallin' around, tryin' to put his hands under one of Roland's shoulders.

very touchy about markers in the first place, and very, very mean about guys who do not take up their markers in the second place. And the Skipper has promised to lift the I.O.U. the followin' Monday. Naturally he is a little desperate, and after some short conversation he agrees to go along with me.

"WE can get to Clark City," the Skipper says after he has come up to the boardin'-house to flatten out the details, "on the blinds, all right. But," he goes on, and his face gets longer than it already was, "we have got to have a sawbuck to fix you up before we go."

"Why," I asks, "do we have to have ten fish? I am about the same size as Freddy—anyhow, near enough. If I can get into that mask and into the ring, there will be none that know the difference until it is too late."

"You forget," the Skipper says, "about the tattooin'. We have got to have you tattooed, and that design of Freddy's is an expensive proposition. I was out to Coney the day he had it done. It's an eight-dollar job, and tattooin' prices have

stood up wonderful well durin' the depression. It won't be a dime under that now."

"Well," I said, "I have got six thins, cash money, and that will get us out to Coney and back, and I am eatin' on the cuff here at my boardin'-house, and I guess the only thing is for us to go out there and see if the tattooer will take a marker. You was always a great one to get things with a promise," I goes on. "I will let you do the talkin' to him."

Now as I said, the Skipper is a great groaner, and sure enough, he finds this guy out there at Coney, and he picks out the design that Freddy has got on him, and he gets it slapped on my arm just like it is on Freddy's, and though it hurts quite some, I do not object, because I have a feelin' that it is the first step to fame and fortune, and it is a well known fact that I have waited quite a while for both.

The Skipper he gives this tattooer two bits, which is what his current on his electric needle and his ink stands him, and he gives him a check for the rest, which of course is rubber, but which we

hope will be all right by the time this guy gets it to the bank; and I guess he does too.

And so we go down to the yards that night, which is Friday, and catch a fast passenger to Clark City. We figure to be in transom four hours and roll into Clark City the next mornin' at two, barrin' railroad bulls. And we make that all right.

But then our troubles thicken up. We have no sooner got into town, and I have corked off in a shed down by the station, than the Skipper, he goes out and prowls around and finds that Freddy is hid out somewheres and no one knows where he is at. The Skipper has some idea of fakin' some kind of a telegram does he find him, and sendin' him off some place where he could not get in touch with Roland nor no one. The Skipper had aimed to tell him that he would fix up about the substitute for him, and fix it with Roland and so forth.

Now of course that plan sounds pretty thin, and you would think it couldn't be done even if the Skipper could find Freddy, but Freddy is a very simple fellow, and I doubt not any that the Skipper could have ribbed it up okay, because Freddy's manager, who has got quite a stable, knew that the Clark City string was played out, and had gone off somewheres leavin' nobody to think for Freddy. And when there aint anybody around to think for Freddy—well, he just don't.

Anyway, I am hid out down in this shed, and the Skipper comes back and tells me this. He also tells me, though, that the Masked Marvel has got a private dressin'-room, that bein' part of the secrecy ballyhoo, and that there aint but one thing to do.

The Skipper has got very brave now, as he has suddenly remembered that this guy what he give the marker to, and who is very touchy sometimes, shows he is mad by not only shootin' you, but also by stickin' a knife into you and turnin' it around a time or two, casual-like.

SO he tells me what this one thing to do is, and I don't want no part of it. But as I said, the Skipper is a great groaner, and he plays on my heartstrings, and finally I tells him that I will go along.

So that night we sneak into the hall about the time the semi-wind-up is goin' on, the Skipper givin' the guy some song and dance at the athletes' entrance that

I do not catch, as I have my hat pulled down over what used to be my ears, and my collar turned way up. But we get in.

We get in, and the Skipper he heads right for Freddy's dressin'-room, and we bust right in. And there is Freddy sittin' there all by hisself cuttin' his toe-nails. Freddy don't say nothin'—just gives us a simple look and kinda grins; and the Skipper he turns and snaps the door, and locks it from the inside and tells me to go ahead.

BY this time Freddy has finished up his prunin' and become mildly curious as to what we are doin' here, and so forth. I do not tell him nothin', but just walk over to him, and turnin' real quick, slap a flyin' mare on him and buggy-whip him over my head so hard onto that concrete floor that it would have undoubtedly killed him if he had not been a rassler. And the Skipper, he hauls out the rope, and we tie him up and gag him good, and stuff him into the shower-room and shut the door.

By the time I have come back from the shower-room, the Skipper has got the bag open and has got Freddy's tights and shoes out, and the mask; and when they knock on the door, I am ready. I am ready, and I know that in a little while I will be the champ, and that they can pick the seeds out of *that*! I will be in the golden chair, and the guy what tells the promoters what to do.

The Skipper sneaks off into the crowd, and I am walkin' down the aisle, and the peasants are hollerin' and laughin', and I can see Roland standin' in the ring. And he is laughin' too. But to tell the truth, I am laughin' harder than anyone, but I keep my mouth fierce, and nobody can see my eyes under this old piece of stockin' I got over them.

I climb into the ring, and I see Roland take a good gander at the tattooin' on my arm, and he kind of winks at me; and though he cannot see it, I wink back, and then we are in the center of the ring, and the introductions are over, and the referee is tellin' Roland that there is a twelve o'clock curfew law in Clark City on Saturday night, and that he is not to let me stay no longer than eleven-fifty, and I shake my head up and down. It is now eleven o'clock, and I am in there about to rattle for the championship, and I am feelin' good.

Well, we come out of our corners, and we stall around a minute or two, and then we are down on the mat, and we are

goin' through the regular act of slappin' each other around. Roland is takin' it easy, and so am I, and the peasants are hollerin'. Roland gets a little careless, not carin', knowin' it is in the sack, and all of a sudden I slap a hammer-lock on him, and he is not fakin' when he starts groanin' and makin' faces. And he makes some beauties, too.

SO then I tells him who he's in here with, and that we are levelin'; he turns right white and beats the mat, and the first fall is mine, and I go back to my corner not even breathin' hard. And I look across the ring, and I see that Roland and his manager is over in their corner goin' into a perfect tandem, but they know they can't stop it now.

We are rasslin' two out of three, and the usual thing is for them matches to go three falls, but I figure to get out there and throw this mugg two in concussion, because time is gonna be short, and if they called the curfew and stopped the match, Roland would still be champ, and I would be headin' back for the farm and would not never get another rasslin'-match.

It is eleven-thirty when we come out for the second fall, and I see right off that Roland is gonna try and stall. I chase him all over the ring for a few minutes, but I can't catch him. I am chasin' him like this at eleven-forty, when all of a sudden my feet slips out from under me where his manager has throwed some oil or somethin' while I am not lookin', and I am down and Roland is on top of me, and he has got a wrist-lock on me, and things look bad.

I am tryin' to get loose and cussin', and my wrist is hurtin', and time is gettin' short, when I hear from up in the gallery the Skipper's voice bellow out above the crowd:

"Don't shoot the champ!"

And that is enough; Roland jerks back for a minute, and I have got him. I have got a half-nelson and a crotch hold, and I have my chin on one of his shoulders and my right hand on his other, and I have got him pinned.

The crowd is now hollerin' somethin' fierce, because they know somethin' has gone screwy. I get his shoulders down, and he is wavin' his arms and I am holdin' his shoulders down, one with my chin, and I have had them down 'way longer than three seconds, but I still don't get

them three taps on my back. And the referee, he is down on his hands and knees beside us, stallin' around, puttin' his hands, or tryin' to put his hands, under one of Roland's shoulders. And finally he gives up, I guess, because I get them three taps, and I stand up, smilin' and bowin' and reachin' for my mask and wavin' to the crowd.

I am the champion of the world, and I am feelin' good.

The next thing I know, somebody has grabbed me from behind, and I am sailin' through the air over the top rope, and I am tryin' to get my hands up because I am headin' right for the concrete floor of one of them aisles, and that is the last I know.

When I get conscience, I am in a bed in a hospital, and the Skipper he is sittin' there beside me lookin' very blue.

And pretty soon my head starts to pound, and I am rememberin', though it hurts somethin' awful.

"That was a hell of a thing to do!" I says. "Throwin' the champion outa the ring, just for spite. Wait till I see that Roland."

"What champion?" the Skipper asks, and his face sags down some more.

"*What* champion? Why, me!" I yells. "I throwed that palooka, and I am now the champ. You seen it yourself!"

The Skipper gets up lookin' still more mournful. "I guess you are all right," he says. "I guess I will go."

"Go?" I says, and I am feelin' a touch worried.

"Yes," the Skipper says. "To China."

"To China?" I says, kind of blank-like.

"Yes," he says. "China! That referee never tapped you on the back. Roland reached around and tapped you hisself. And then you got up. . . . But I guess you know about that."

WELL, I am back on the farm and married to Lottie and doin' well. We get a letter every once in a while from the Skipper. He is in Shanghai, and I am pleased to say that he has found a very wealthy old gink that he can beat playin' Kelly pool, and he seems to like the climate, as he is up to one twenty-three, which is very fat for him.

And I am glad that I am no longer a rassler, as I have come to agree with Lottie that it is not really a very honorable business.

"Right Hand Man," another lively if more serious sports story by Eustace Cockrell, will appear in an early issue.

Murder on the Merry-go Round

A strange case solved by the gypsy detective Isaac Heron.

By
WILLIAM
J. MAKIN



"WELL, it's one way of enjoying yourself," mused Detective Inspector Graves, connected with Scotland Yard.

"But not *your* way, eh?" smiled his friend Isaac Heron. A strange man, Heron: a gypsy by birth, he had inherited enough money to live as he chose. And his interest in detective work, coupled with his wide acquaintance among his Romany brethren, had made him very helpful to Graves.

The two were watching a merry-go-round with its painted horses, and its swan- and peacock-chariots, swirling and gliding to the wheezy waltz from "The Merry Widow." Children, youths and men and women bobbed and grinned or shrieked as they curvetted on the wooden horses.

"This is the first time I've been on Hampstead Heath at a bank holiday since I was promoted from constable," said Graves, with the reminiscent air of a man of suburban respectability.

"It should do you good," added Isaac Heron. "This is humanity in the playful raw."

"Within another hour it will be in the drunken raw," grunted Graves disapprovingly. "I know!"

But the respectable disapproval of the Scotland Yard man was not reflected in the swarthy features of Isaac Heron. Beneath the arc-lamps, amidst the blare of mechanical music, raucous shouts and clanging bells, the gypsy seemed at home and happy. His oblique eyes slanted in every direction. They noticed the shy entrance and exit of women into the dirty white tent of Gypsy Moore, "*Fortune Teller to Royalty*," as her crudely designed poster announced. He observed a brawny but pot-bellied man swinging a hammer and trying vainly to clang the bell at the top of the pole. Finally his gaze swiveled back to the roaring merry-go-round.

"Ten o'clock!" snapped Inspector Graves, glancing at his watch. "In an-

other hour the fair will be over. I think I should be getting home. Mrs. Graves, you know—"

Isaac Heron smiled a little sadly.

"You haven't the proper capacity for enjoyment, Graves," he said. "I was about to suggest that we mount a horse apiece on the merry-go-round."

"I!" exclaimed Graves, aghast. "And with all these constables about!"

"You wouldn't be the first distinguished man to ride on a merry-go-round," laughed Heron. "Why, at the moment, I can see that well-known Continental diplomat Count Apolyi bumping about with gusto on a wooden horse."

"Where?" demanded Graves.

Heron nodded in the direction of a keen-faced, monocled man with a white mustache, clinging to a twisted brass pole. "There he is!"

Graves tightened his lips.

"Nice sort of place for a diplomat to come!" he growled. "The Special Branch were asked to detach a man to guard him. He's over here to negotiate a treaty for his country. And like all men of importance in Europe today, he fears the assassin."

"Perhaps Count Apolyi feels safer on Hampstead Heath than in Whitehall," smiled Heron.

"Among these drunks and rowdies?" queried Graves. "Look at that fellow who's lost his hat in the peacock-chariot behind him. Drunk as a lord! Wait a moment until they come around again. There he is! Beautifully tight, eh?"

Lolling in the gayly painted chariot, the pale-faced man in seedy black clothes dangled a hand over the side and seemed oblivious to all the noise and lights swirling about him. There was a foolish grin on his face. The next moment he had passed.

ONCE again they came round, Count Apolyi riding with straight back and fixed monocle as though his wooden horse were trotting along Rotten Row. A flashily dressed "peroxide blonde" riding at his side stretched out her red-tipped fingers to stroke him.

"That's why the Count is spending the evening on Hampstead Heath," nodded Graves.

But the narrowed gaze of Isaac Heron ignored the diplomat and looked again at that lolling, pasty-faced figure in the peacock-chariot behind. The music of the waltz was dribbling to an end. The merry-go-round was slowing down. In-

stinctively the crowd standing about surged forward.

Inspector Graves nodded to a bowler-hatted man.

"Nice job you've got, Symes," he said, indicating the diplomat with a jerk of his head.

"You said it, Inspector," growled the other detective wearily. "He looks good for another three hours."

THE surging crowd carried them forward. The merry-go-round stopped, and the people were sliding, laughingly dizzy, from their steeds. The Count gallantly held out his hand to the peroxide blonde. Still oblivious to his surroundings, the pasty-faced man lolled in his chariot.

"All chynge!" yelled a cockney. He leaned over the peacock-chariot. "'Aving another ride, sir? Threepence all the way."

"You'll have to throw him off," said Graves with a smile.

"I'm afraid you'll have to carry him off," said Isaac Heron quietly. He had been bending over that lolling figure. "The man's dead."

"What!"

"Shot through the heart," said the gypsy. "You can see the blood."

He pointed to a red pool slowly collecting in the bottom of the chariot.

Faces strained forward. Despite the clanging of bells, the roaring music and the shouts, an intense silence seemed centered round that chariot with its lolling, grinning corpse.

"Himmel!" spluttered the voice of Count Apolyi, who had also joined the group. "It is an attempt at assassination. The bullet was meant for me. Don't you see? I was riding just in front of him."

The monocle dropped from his eye, and he glanced round fearfully.

But Inspector Graves had already acted promptly.

"Gather up four constables, Symes!" he snapped, over his shoulder. The bowler-hatted man slid through the crowd. Then Graves turned to the diplomat. "I must request you to wait here a few moments, Count."

"But this is terrible—terrible," groaned the Count. "I was assured that in London I could move about in perfect safety, and—"

"And you are still alive, Count," nodded the Scotland Yard man laconically. "So why worry?"

"But the assassin may still be lurking here—in the crowd—" insisted Apolyi, glancing round fearfully.

"Stop that damned music!" commanded Graves to the shirt-sleeved men in charge of the merry-go-round. The mechanical organ was still wheezing the Merry Widow waltz. A jerk of a lever, and the music sobbed into silence. At the same moment four constables headed by Symes pushed their way through the crowd.

"Two of these constables will act as your escort, Count," nodded Graves. "I presume your car is not far off?"

"Of course."

"Well, the constables will go with you and see you safely off the fair-ground.—Symes!"

"Yes, Inspector."

"Go with the Count and his escort. When you get to the car, drive to Hampstead police-station and wait there for me."

"But this is very inconvenient," broke in the diplomat. "I have a most important engagement—" He glanced at the peroxide blonde, whose face had now taken on a sullen expression.

"Then I'm afraid you must cancel it, Count!" commanded Graves, and turning his back upon the diplomat, he left the affair to Symes of the Special Service branch.

A few minutes later the police were lifting the body of the pasty-faced man out of the chariot. Suddenly a screaming, hysterical voice broke through the crowd.

"Alf! Oh, Alf! What's happened?"

A woman in a pink frock and pink hat pushed her way forward. She caught a glimpse of the figure being lifted onto a stretcher.

"Is—is he dead?" she asked.

Inspector Graves nodded.

"I'm afraid so, ma'am. Do you know him?"

"He—he's my husband."

And she swayed and would have fallen, if a man in a cloth cap who had followed her through the crowd had not caught her.

The man caressed her gently.

"Don't take on so, Elsie. . . . There—there, my dear."

"Poor old Alf!" she sobbed.

"I know," nodded the man in the cloth cap sympathetically.

He put his arm about her shoulders and led her through the crowd, following in the wake of that grim burden on a

"*Himmel!*" spluttered Count Apolyi. "The bullet was meant for me!"



Illustrated by
Hervé Stein

stretcher. Crowds jostled and swarmed about them.

"Can't we find a quiet spot in this damned fair?" asked Inspector Graves.

"There's the gypsy fortune-teller's tent," suggested Isaac Heron.

"Good idea," nodded Graves. "I'll take possession of it until the police ambulance arrives."

He gave his orders to the constables. They carried the body into the tent where Gypsy Moore, "Fortune Teller to Royalty," had her pitch. The woman in pink and the man in the cloth cap followed. By this time more policemen had arrived, and they formed a cordon round the tent.

A nod was given to the shirt-sleeved men in charge of the merry-go-round. The wheezy organ was started up again. Shouts and noise resumed their sway.

"Come on, lydies and gents. Ride yer-selves to music, threepence a time!"

A man was busy with a cloth in the peacock-chariot. But for a time the crowd hung back. Then a youth with a cigarette dangling limply from his lips clambered upon one of the wooden horses, half dragging a snickering girl with him. Others followed.



"Think they'll get the blighter that did him in?" the man asked Heron.

Fifteen minutes later the merry-go-round was crowded again, whizzing its cargoes of happy, laughing humans through the lights, the clanging bells and the roar of the fair.

AND Heron was still standing there thoughtfully regarding the merry-go-round when Inspector Graves emerged from the tent and joined him.

"I'm afraid our evening's been spoiled, Heron," said the Scotland Yard man. "I shall have to stay on here till the Divisional Surgeon arrives. But if you care to get back to your flat in Jermyn Street, I won't detain you."

A smile crossed Heron's keen features.

"Thank you, Graves. But I think I'll stay. There are one or two things puzzling me. I would like to get them right in my mind."

The Scotland Yard man nodded.

"Yes, there are one or two puzzling features. But I got to work quickly," he went on. "I've got a cordon of police right round the fair now. Everybody who passes through that cordon is being searched for firearms. It won't be easy for the assassin to escape."

"If he hasn't already escaped?" suggested Isaac Heron.

"I don't think so," said Graves. "It's obvious to me that the man in the peacock-chariot—his name is Alfred Jackson, by the way—has only been dead a few minutes. And it wasn't a revolver shot that killed him."

"No, I know that."

"You saw me pick up that rifle bullet out of the peacock-chariot, eh?" smiled Graves. "Well, that's how the killing was done—with a rifle. The assassin must have fired two, perhaps three shots at Count Apolyi on the merry-go-round, and missed each time. When he saw that he had murdered some poor inoffensive devil, he got frightened and moved into the crowd. What puzzles me is that the murder must have been done while we were standing here looking on at the whirling merry-go-round. Why didn't we hear the shots fired?"

"We did," said the gypsy. "But we didn't associate them with murder."

"What d'you mean?"

Even as the detective asked the question, through the blare of music and noise came the *crack—crack* of a rifle. Graves jumped and swung round.

"Exactly," nodded Isaac Heron. "The shooting-gallery. Men have been firing there at targets and celluloid balls the whole evening, and our ears became so accustomed to the noise that when a man fired a rifle to kill, we never noticed it."

But already the Scotland Yard man was striding in the direction of the shooting-gallery.

"I'm going to ask that fellow in charge of the shooting-gallery a few questions," he said over his shoulder.

"A waste of time," observed Heron.

Nevertheless, Graves persisted. The shirt-sleeved man loading the rifles was disconcerted at the sudden onslaught by a Scotland Yard man and two constables. While Graves questioned the proprietor closely, the two constables searched the ground in between the targets. In the meantime, Isaac Heron disappeared.

TEN minutes later, however, he was again gazing with oblique eyes at the merry-go-round. By now the tragedy had been forgotten and roaring business was in full swing.

"Not much to chew on in the shooting-gallery," confessed Graves, appearing at the side of the gypsy.

"That shooting-gallery seemed the ideal place from which to commit murder," he went on. "It would be easy for a man firing at a target to swing round,

point the rifle at the merry-go-round and shoot again. But—"

"But?"

"But there isn't a rifle there capable of killing at such a distance. All small caliber, and the bullets are propelled by the cap only. And though I've searched the shooting-gallery from end to end, I haven't discovered either a gun or an empty cartridge such as the one which must have killed Alfred Jackson. Moreover, the proprietor of the shooting-gallery swears that he has been there all the evening, and watched every person firing. He would have been certain to have seen anybody swinging round to fire at the merry-go-round."

HERON said calmly: "I warned you that you'd be wasting your time."

"But damn it all," spluttered Graves, "here is murder done in the middle of a crowd of some thousands, and with two Scotland Yard men and a number of constables all looking on. Something has got to be done about it."

"I agree," smiled the gypsy. "And while you were searching the shooting-gallery I was searching the real spot from where the murder was committed. These are what you are looking for, eh?"

And he held out the palm of his hand on which reposed two empty cartridge cases.

"Jove, that looks more like it!" said Graves, pouncing on them. "Where did you find these?"

"Not fifty yards away."

"But how could a man calmly level a rifle and fire two shots at the merry-go-round unobserved, beneath all these arc lamps and amidst this crowd of people?"

Heron took a cigarette from his case and lit it.

"I think I've told you before, Graves," he said, "that bloodhounds are so busy nosing the earth that they fail to raise their heads. Look up, man. Lift up your eyes. Gaze above the arc-lamps. For that is where the murderer leveled his rifle and fired."

"Then he must have fired from the sky," said Graves, testily. "For that's all I can see—a black sky."

The gypsy nodded.

"The murderer sat there, but not exactly in the sky. He was perched in the next best thing—a tree. Look at it, Graves! A good, leafy oak-tree. Could a murderer hope for a better shooting-perch? Naturally, I found the empty cartridges at the foot."

Once again the Inspector was like a hound on the leash.

"Perhaps the fellow is still hiding there!" he exclaimed, moving toward the tree.

But the brown hand of the gypsy drew him back.

"He's not. I climbed that tree five minutes ago and explored it thoroughly. No, he's among the crowd, now."

"And the rifle? Did he leave it in the tree?"

"No trace of it."

"If we could find the rifle, we could probably trace the murderer," said Graves, gazing excitedly into the tree.

"So the murderer realizes," nodded Heron. "He's taken it away with him."

"Then we're almost certain to get him," declared Graves. "For every man leaving this fair is being searched. But here's the divisional surgeon. I must go and talk with him."

"And I think I'll have a talk with Gypsy Moore, the fortune-teller, whose tent you've appropriated for the evening," said Heron. "I found her sitting on a bucket and crying."

"Oh, we'll compensate her," growled Graves, and hurried away.

IT was nearly midnight. The lights of the fair had burned themselves out and revealed again the diamond-like stars in the black velvet sky above. The blare of music had ceased. The crowds had gone.

A solemn little procession was wending its way through the eerie silence toward three waiting cars. Two constables carrying a stretcher headed the group; behind it came the broken-hearted wife of Alfred Jackson, her pink hat awry, her bowed form still supported by the faithful man in the cloth cap.

"Been a pal of Alf for years," this man was saying to the sympathetic Isaac Heron walking beside him. "I was his best man at the wedding, too. This has fair broke up Elsie."

"I've always tried to be a good wife to him," sobbed the woman.

"Never you mind," insisted the man. "I'm going to look after you. It'll all be *san fairey am* now."

Their hands clung together.

"In the war, weren't you?" suggested Isaac Heron.

"That's right," nodded the man in the cloth cap. "In the same platoon as old Alf. Got a Blighty one in the thigh. I was lucky. Got my discharge for that

wound. Lucky Joe Gould, they called me."

"I thought you seemed a little stiff in that left leg," nodded the gypsy.

"Lucky, too, I didn't go on that merry-go-round with Alf this evening," went on the loquacious Joe Gould. "But Elsie, here, wanted to have her fortune told by Gypsy Moore. 'I'll go on the merry-go-round, see,' said Alf. 'And you take Elsie along to the fortune-teller, Joe, and see she doesn't spend more than a couple of bob, see.' And that's where we were when some blighter did Alf in. D'you think they'll get him, sir?"

"I think so," murmured Isaac Heron.

The little procession had reached the three motorcars. Detective Inspector Graves was questioning the sergeant in charge of the police cordon.

"Any luck?"

"Found nobody with a rifle, sir. We've got three tough characters and a foreign bloke under temporary arrest. They're at the Hampstead station now, sir."

"Better search the fair-ground," ordered Graves to the sergeant. "Go into those tents and caravans—everywhere. If you discover a rifle, report to me at once at the station."

"Very good, sir."

FIFTEEN minutes later the little procession was entering the police-station at Hampstead. The body of Alfred Jackson had been removed to the mortuary, where the Divisional Surgeon was busy probing for the bullet that had caused death.

A weary but combative Count Apolyi rose from his chair as Inspector Graves entered the office. Symes had been sitting watchfully by his side.

"Gentlemen," protested the Count, "this is really intolerable. I have been kept sitting here in this police-station for hours. And my affairs are most important."

Once again he glanced at the peroxide blonde, who had spent the waiting smoking cigarette after cigarette.

"At least, in a police-station you are safe," pointed out Graves.

"Then you have caught the assassin, *hein?*"

"No, we have not," admitted the Inspector. "Perhaps you can help us, Count. Have you noticed any suspicious characters following you about?"

"None except this man," retorted the Count, pointing to Symes. "However, statesmen of Europe must always be ex-

pected to face the bullet or bomb of the assassin."

Proudly he drew himself up before the blonde.

"Then, in that case," murmured Graves, "I'll see that you are escorted back to your hotel, Count Apolyi. That is, if you *are* going to your hotel."

The Count regarded the blonde despairingly.

"I suppose I must return to my hotel," he said regretfully. "In these dangerous times one must think of one's country first."

Graves nodded to Symes.

"Well, good night, then," he said abruptly, holding out his hand to the Count. "I will call upon you tomorrow, and acquaint you with the results of our investigations."

"I shall be happy to receive you," murmured the Count. He had replaced his monocle. He offered his arm to the blonde. She sniffed but accepted. Together they sauntered out of the station, the inevitable Symes in the rear.

"Well, we haven't got much further," said Graves aloud. He had intended the remark for Isaac Heron, but the gypsy was still in the charge-room, chattering away to the man in the cloth cap, Joe Gould. A moment later he entered the inner office.

"Sorry, Inspector. Were you asking for me?" he said, rising and coming over to the Scotland Yard man. "I've been exchanging war experiences with Gould."

"I was saying," went on Graves, "that we don't seem to have got much further. Until the police cordon find the rifle or better still, the man with the rifle, we won't get any further."

"I shouldn't depend on that," said the gypsy. "The murderer and his weapon have already passed through the police cordon."

"I tell you it's impossible, Heron. Every man leaving that fair after the murder was searched for arms."

"I wasn't searched," said Heron.

"Don't be ridiculous!"

"And you weren't searched," went on the gypsy inexorably.

DETECTIVE Inspector Graves seemed about to explode, but the conversation was interrupted by a sergeant.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said to the Scotland Yard man, "but is there any need to keep the—er—widow and this Joseph Gould any longer? I've taken down their depositions."

"No, of course not," snapped Graves. "Let 'em go home and—"

"*They* passed through your police cordon, unsearched," interrupted the gypsy.

THUNDERSTRUCK, Graves stepped back. "You don't suggest—" he said in a whisper.

"The woman, no," said Heron, shaking his head. "Though I shouldn't be surprised if she is the cause of it. She's rather good-looking, you know, Graves, if you look twice."

"Then the man, the friend?" asked Graves.

"I should say so," nodded Heron with a sigh. "I found he was a sniper with a first-class record for shooting during the war. And snipers learned how to conceal themselves in trees," he added.

"But why should he want to assassinate Apolyi?"

"He didn't," said the gypsy a little wearily. "It was Count Apolyi himself who persuaded you that this was a political affair. The murderer knew nothing about him. Moreover, he was too good a shot to miss his victim. I think you'll find, Graves, that the affair after all is the usual *crime passionnel*. Joe Gould is in love with Alf Jackson's wife. That was obvious to anyone who saw them immediately after the tragedy."

"But the rifle! Where has he concealed it?"

"I expect you'll find it strapped to his left leg," said Heron. "Joe Gould has a job in an engineering works. He also has a lathe of his own at home. And I imagine that what he doesn't know about rifles isn't worth knowing."

The Scotland Yard man crooked a finger at the sergeant.

"Bring in that fellow with the cloth cap," he commanded. "And see that a couple of constables come with him."

"Yes sir."

"Oh, and hold that woman in the meantime."

"Yes sir."

A few seconds later, Joe Gould was ushered into the office. The Scotland Yard man rose from his chair, and held out his hand.

"Well, I just want to say good night," said Graves affably, "and to tell you that—"

With his free hand he clutched at the man's trouser-leg and with a quick jerk ripped it partly away. The glint of steel was revealed. Joe Gould gave a cry like

a wild beast, but Graves was holding his hand as in a vise. The two constables rushed forward and held him.

Graves bent and examined the torn trousers. The shortened barrel of a modern rifle, the bolt, with the stock also cut down, was strapped to the man's leg.

"Very neat!" commented Graves. Then he nodded to the constables. "All right, put him in the cell. He's our man all right."

There was silence in the office for a few moments. Then Detective Inspector Graves cleared his throat in nervous fashion.

"Well, Heron, I've got to thank you again," he grunted with reluctance.

BUT Heron laughed, and shook his head deprecatingly.

"No, Graves. You've really got to thank Gypsy Moore, whose tent you appropriated. I had a talk with her while she sat on that bucket and cried. It was she who told me that a woman had come into her tent to have her fortune told, and the moment the gypsy gazed at her palm she saw blood on it. As a true *dukkerer* she was horrified. But she merely told the woman that there were two men in her life, and that she had better be careful that they did not fight each other. But even as she was telling this to the woman, who was, of course, Elsie Jackson, Joe Gould had loafed away from the tent, shinned up the tree in the darkness, unstrapped his rifle and began firing murderously at his friend Alf Jackson on the merry-go-round, as he had planned to do, that evening. He was he who persuaded Alf Jackson to go on the merry-go-round, and he also persuaded Elsie to go into Gypsy Moore's tent. That was his moment. For the rest he trusted to his marksmanship and the rifle he had made over on his own lathe. His first shot missed, but the second found its goal. And the shooting-gallery noise camouflaged his own shooting."

"Is that all?" asked the Inspector, impressed.

"That is all," nodded Isaac Heron. "But don't forget to send that compensation to Gypsy Moore."

"I won't," declared Graves fervently.

As Isaac Heron walked out of the police-station he glimpsed a pathetic figure in a pink frock and a pink hat sitting on a bench in the charge-room.

He sighed, and passed into the night.

Another fine story by Mr. Makin will appear in an early issue.



A police reporter's wildest hour is vividly described in this brief story by a writer new to these pages.

THE assistant city editor of the *Herald-World* extended the telephone to Baldy Macpherson and said: "Steve Fuller's got something about Swell-head Mordren, Chief."

Macpherson quit debating whether he'd replate Page Four for the night final and said: "Yeah?"

"Mac?" came the voice over the phone. "Steve speaking. Listen, this is a honey: A squad of cops led by Lieutenant Lacey Malloy raided a hide-out at Blank-four-seven Eighth Avenue at two-forty-five and grabbed Swell-head Mordren, two of his gunmen and three blondes—one a sweetheart if I ever saw one. Tony Scarloni, one of the torpedoes, reached for a gun, and Malloy shot him through the shoulder.

"And here's the laugh, Mac. Swell-head was wearing one of his three-hundred-dollar suits, and wouldn't spoil the fit of it by carrying a rod. So the current public enemy sticks up his mitts just like any other lug. I always said— What? Oh, they're charging him with the murder of Dutch Skiltus; if that isn't enough to burn him, they're going to try him for killing— *Oh, my God!*"

The sudden exclamation in such a terrible change of tone made Baldy's eyes snap wide. Over the wire came four patting sounds, as if a man beat on a rug. Baldy didn't wave for a re-write man. He cried: "Steve? Steve? What—"

"Mac, can you hear this whisper? I'm crouched down in the booth whispering up at the phone. Listen, Mac, Swell-head must have got away from the cops. *He just ran in.* He's got a tommy-rod and a woman's handbag full of cartridges. What you heard was him cracking down

on the proprietor. He's firing through the door now. He's going to shoot it out with the cops. There! I just pulled the light cord. He can't see me when I'm down like this. Listen, Mac, this is a public booth, and the operator will cut me off after five minutes, and I haven't got another nickel. Call the telephone people and have this line kept open. I—

"Geez, Mac, those are bullets you hear. Cops' bullets. They're storming this hole in the wall. I've got to get out. . . . Stay and cover the story? For crysake, Mac, those cops will kill me as quick as Swell-head. . . . What'd you say? The telephone booth is bullet-proof? How do you know? Telephone people been putting them around? You're sure? But are you sure *this* one is? No, I know you wouldn't lie.

"Well, okay. Anyway, if I showed my schnozzle, Swell-head would shoot it off. He's always hated me ever since I wrote that feature piece about him. No, those weren't bullets; those were my teeth doing an individual tap-dance. . . .

"The cops are gathering fast. All I can hear is sirens and bells and whistles; and bullets rattling in, and Swell-head firing back. It's a madhouse. There must be a hundred cops out there, shooting in from all angles. This is just a hole in the wall with a single door, and only one small window, and it looks as if Swell-head can hold it until he runs out of ammo or a slug gets him. . . .

"Swell-head just turned around. I can see his eyes? Mac, he's so full of cocaine he's singing. Can you tie it? Now he's wiping off his fifty-dollar shoes and straightening that thirty-dollar tie. Now he's barricading himself behind some steel boxes—humidors, I guess they are. He's laughing, but it's a laugh that makes me shiver.

Night Final

By FREDERICK C. PAINTON

"Wow! The cops just made a rush, and Swell-head fired ten shots. He got somebody too. I heard the scream. Oh, man, there it comes. A tear-gas bomb! I can hardly— It's me, Mac. I can't see a thing—oh, give me a chance to cough and cry, will you? Thank the Lord, Swell-head started the ceiling fan. It's not so bad down here. Swell-head rushed the door and fired twenty shots. Somebody else hurt. Swell-head is laughing like a maniac—

"Oh-oh! I was peeking, and he saw me. Here he comes, Mac! I guess—"

MACPHERSON overheard: "Hi-yuh, Swell-head, you remember me? Steve Fuller? I was just telephoning."

A new voice: "Sure, crummy, I know you. You're the guy that wrote that piece that said I was a second-rate rat with a big head, and a yen for women and clothes. Well, I'm shootin' it out, and I might as well let you have it now."

"Don't be a sap, Swell-head. Watch the door, or they'll surprise you."

"And have you jump me from behind? Nix. I'll just—"

"Listen, Swell-head, wait a minute. You're always saying you're a big shot. Now get this: I'm—sure, I'm hooked up with the *Herald-World's* broadcasting room, WWH, and I'm broadcasting the fight you're putting on here. Get it, Swell-head? You're the only tough boy who ever had his last fight told to fifty million listeners. The world is hearing how you're holding a hundred cops at bay. But it won't hear unless you turn that muzzle the other way."

"Aw, you're ribbing me."

"No, on the level, Swell-head. Just take this receiver if you don't believe me. Everything you're saying is on the air, so cut out the swearing or they'll take away the mike. Look out—there's another tear-gas lemon. . . .

"Mac? Did you hear? He's eating it up. He's gone nuts. Hear that? He's telling Joyce and Laura to listen in and see how a game guy croaks. No, that

wasn't any tap-dance; that was Swell-head stopping a new rush by the cops. And did he do it? That machine-gun sits up and says 'Ah' when he pulls the trigger. He got two cops then. Say, Mac, I'm getting sick to my stomach. I can't stand much more of this. They'll never get him this way unless they burn the place down. He's cracking wise. Wow! Those slugs were close. You're sure this booth is bullet-proof? Oka-ay! . . .

"Listen, Mac: I've got an idea how to get this egg. Can you get a line through to the cops outside? Okay, I'll wait. . . .

"You've got Captain Angus? Swell! Listen, I'll pretend to faint. As I fall over, I'll rap the receiver against the wall. Wait a jiff after the sound, and tell Angus to rush his cops. With a big-headed ape like Mordren, it's fifty to one that he'll try to grandstand into the receiver and that'll keep his mind off the cops. Only, for God's sake, tell the cops to shoot *high*."

Baldy Macpherson barked to the assistant city editor, then spoke into his own receiver, and for four mortal minutes practically held his breath. Somebody played a snare-drum at the other end of the wire. Macpherson wiped away the sweat. Then a voice said: "Hello, Joyce and Laura? My announcer is out cold. Honey, if these bulls get me, I'll take enough of them to hell to make an escort bigger than a mayor ever had on Broadway, and—"

The snare-drum played again. Macpherson looked at the assistant city editor, who said: "They got him, Chief."

SHORTLY after the presses were rolling for the night final, the assistant city editor handed a telephone to Macpherson. A female voice said: "Bellevue Emergency ward, sir. Just a second—"

A new voice said: "Mac, this is Steve. You're a dirty lousy liar. That telephone booth *wasn't* bullet-proof, and I'll be six weeks in this place getting the lead out of me. And you'll pay my salary, guy! How do you like those apples?"

CARAVAN



By JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

Illustrated by John Richard Flanagan

The Story Thus Far:

A WILD winter night it was when my uncle Thurland Spillane came home to my father's farm, which is on the road from Glengariff to Kenmare. Seven years he had been away, he and his brother my Uncle Flane. Untamed hawks of trouble were they both.

"And where might you have come from now?" asked my father.

"Out of Russia," answered Thurland. "By China and other places. I have hurried here because another person—a person that I love more than my two eyes and my two hands—is making for your farm. Across the world she is heading for this little spot in Kerry!"

And he went on to tell us of this lovely lady, daughter of a czar and a woman of Perm. In Irkutsk, the assassins of Czar Nicholas had sought to kill her too, and Thurland had fought for her, and killed the assassins—and there was a price on his head in Russia because of that. . . . They had fallen in love, but had to part to evade pursuit.

And he had given her the name of our farm in Kerry as his only fixed address. Now, he had learned, she was coming—and he was here to meet her. . . .

She came at last, a lady even lovelier than Thurland described her. And it was a joy to see the two homeless wanderers together at our peaceful farm. But pursuit caught up with them—in the person of a giant Russian. Thurland fought him, choked him—left him for dead, and fled the country again with Anastasia.

Long months passed. Then came a letter from Thurland—mailed from Fez, where he and Flane and the lady were making ready for a hazardous journey into the far Sahara in quest of a rich buried treasure Flane had heard of.

I was fifteen, and strong for my age. And Africa came up and snuffed around my bed. That night I made a bundle of my clothes, climbed out of the window and took the road to Kenmare.

In Cork I made friends with a boy of my own age, and through his help won a

TREASURE



*The epic story of a daring
quest beyond the Sahara.*

job as cabin-boy on a ship sailing to Morocco. At Algiers my friend Felix and I were given shore-leave; and we got into trouble aplenty in a native café; indeed we might have lost our lives had we not been rescued by—my Uncle Thurland! None other! Passing by, he had heard our Irish voices.

Felix rejoined the ship; but I stayed with my Uncles Thurland and Flane—and with Anastasia, who was with them. They had a map which located this grand Caravan Treasure far in the southern Sahara, and were making ready to set out. With them I went—to Fez and Marrakech and thence out into the desert beyond the last French outpost. With us also went an Arab wrestler Ahmed Mansour whom my Uncle Flane had beat in a great bout, and had made friends with. With us also were the hairy man Blore, and a strange dwarf who knew of the Caravan Treasure. . . .

A mad and desperate journey it was. Often we had to ride for our lives, for the farther reaches of the Sahara are the haunt of raiders and robbers. Sometimes we had to fight. But there was no turning back; my uncles grew more determined on their treasure quest.

Exhausted and starved, at length we found our way barred by bandits laying siege to a town in our path. Perforce we joined forces with the townspeople and drove off the raiders. The grateful sheik gave us provisions and fresh camels; and accompanied by a slave girl we had rescued from her captors a few days before, and by a fierce one-eyed Moor who volunteered to go with us, we set forth once more into the Great Unknown. (*The story continues in detail:*)

WE moved along the trail up which had come the raiders; and here and there Africa thrust up plainly written

warnings to us: The carcasses of camels rotting by the wayside, the bodies of three dead men that the sand tried to cover, a nomad camp still smoldering.

The one-eyed man was our guide now, he knowing the country. After passing through the defile we crossed a great sandy plain, and in the very middle of this we struck a storm. The devils of the wastes attacked.

We heard it coming before it struck us. From the south came a dull roaring noise like a thousand automobiles in motion. The one-eyed man halted the camels, and as fast as we could we turned their heads away from the coming storm and took shelter in the lee of the beasts, covering our heads with blankets so that we would not be smothered by the sand that we would breathe into our nostrils.

The thing fell upon us, a black wall of sand moving at tremendous speed. It blotted out everything and it made the afternoon into the blackest night; the roar of it was frightening. Nothing at all could I see, and no sound but the mad roaring of the wind and the hissing of the sand.

FOR two hours we lay thus, breathing with difficulty, waiting for the sand devils to tire of the bombardment; then the wind eased a little, and we shook the sand from our blankets, and looked out. We were a little stunned, and the frightful roaring noise had affected our ears so that we could hardly hear each other even when we shouted the words. Anastasia's face showed terror. When I took her hands, I found them quite cold.

"Oh, Jimmy," she gasped, "that was frightful; I thought it would never end."

"It's over now," I said. "We mightn't have another."

"I'll die if there's another," she whispered. "I couldn't breathe."

The one-eyed man wished to get to a small village before nightfall, but the storm had delayed us, and the dark came down on us when we were miles from it. Thurland spoke to him about a camp, but the Moor thought it best to push forward; so, tired and weary, we rode on through the black night. We were all silent, the only sounds being the snorting and grunting of the camels. . . . I thought of the picture of the Green Tree Farm that I had seen in the calabash of water. Kerry seemed a long way away—millions and millions of miles.

At last the one-eyed man informed us that we were close to the village. The

camels quickened their steps, knowing that they were close to the walls. The dwarf roused himself and started to sing the song of treasure.

A dog howled ahead of us; then the camel of the one-eyed man roared suddenly and swung aside, nearly pitching the rider from his seat. Flane's camel did the same, and the one on which the dwarf was riding bolted madly into the night.

Thurland called out a warning, and Anastasia and I pulled up. Thurland had dismounted, and had turned his flashlight onto the path we had been pursuing. We followed the white circle as it swept over the ground. It struck something that looked like a black stone some twelve inches in height—another, and another, perhaps twenty or more.

They were placed in a circle, and the questing light rested on each for the space of a few seconds before leaping onto the next. Flane took the bridle of Anastasia's camel and turned the beast so that she couldn't see. The hairy man and Ahmed Mansour had dismounted and were talking together. I knew that something had happened, something that upset Thurland and Flane and the one-eyed guide, but I couldn't tell what.

Thurland gave the halter of his camel to Ahmed Mansour and walked closer to the black stones. The light was full upon them now, and I could see them clearly although I was fifteen yards away. They were not stones at all. They were heads! Heads of men who had been buried up to their necks in the sand and left there to die. Left there in the glaring sun to die!

WITH muttered words Thurland and the one-eyed man climbed onto their camels. The dwarf had mastered his mount and returned to us. We swung abruptly to the right and circled the village in which the dog, alone with the dead, howled mournfully.

"What has happened, Jimmy?" asked Anastasia.

"The guide changed his mind," I stammered. "We are not going to enter the village." I was a clever liar in my efforts to soothe her.

We made camp five miles from the village. We were terribly tired, and I fell asleep while eating a plate of *kous-kous*. I had a dream of the heads that were thrust up out of the sand. I thought that they rolled before us across

the wastes, whipped along by the wind like the great clumps of tumbleweed that the *hamratta* harries. It was a frightful dream.

BUT when I awoke in the morning, the husky voice of Thurland chased away all the memories of the night. Thurland could bury all annoying memories by placing fine golden words on top of them, words that had magic in them.

"An Arab named Sidi Okbar passed here twelve hundred and fifty years ago," said Thurland. "He conquered Africa from Egypt to the Atlantic; and when he found that there was no more land, he rode into the sea and made a swipe or two at the waves, he was that mad with things."

"What happened to him?" I asked.

"He was killed by the Berbers," said Thurland. "I visited his tomb near Biskra, for I love fine fighters. This is a great country for fighters. It's big and wild, and there are no laws, much. If a man wants to conquer a patch of country, he gets a few friends around him and he goes to it. It's like Ireland, only bigger—and it's farther away from England."

The strange exaltation that was upon my uncle grew with each hour that passed. The song that the dwarf sang was a terrible lariat that was pulling us deeper and deeper into the sands, a lariat of words. For words have a great power, as John Trench once told me; and once uttered, they cannot be withdrawn.

"Words are the shadows of deeds," said John Trench. "Cæsar said, 'I will invade Gaul,' and the thing was done. Pilate said, 'Take Him away,' and look what happened! Words are the devil's own things when they're splattered around loosely and without common-sense behind them."

So it was with the words of the dwarf's song. The constant singing of it produced a belief stronger than steel hawsers, in the story of the Caravan Treasure.

The camel ridden by Ahmed Mansour became sick and decided to go no farther. For a few hours the wrestler took turns in riding the beast of the dwarf; then we came to a nomad camp, and Ahmed Mansour decided to get a mount of his own.

The nomads fled into their tents when they saw us coming; but the wrestler, running swiftly, unhobbled a camel that was near a tent, mounted it and rode off, not saying, "By your leave," or anything.



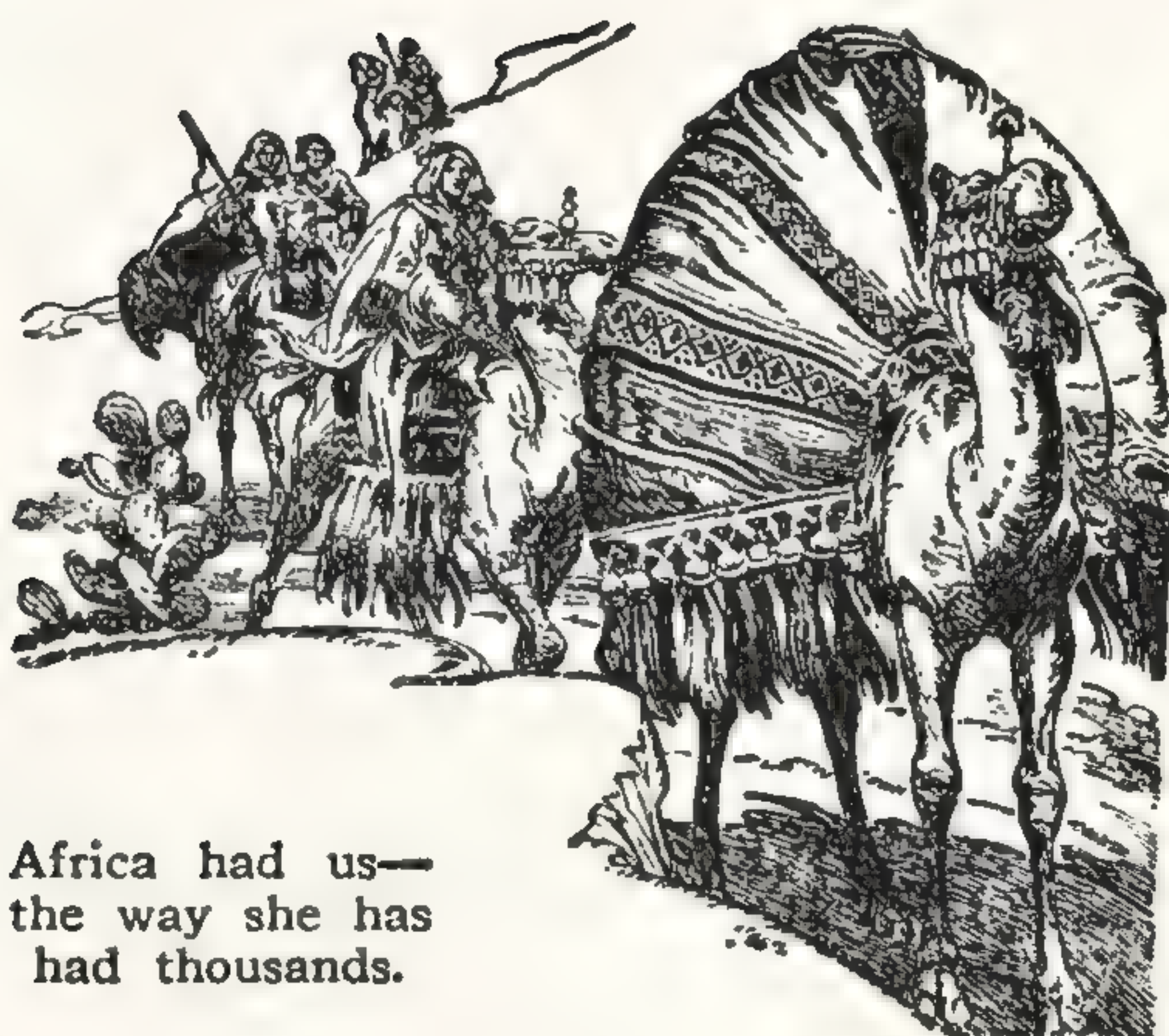
Thurland heard of this later, and though he was angry for a minute, he soon forgot about it.

It was the same at the wells. We were not wanted, because there was little water, but we wouldn't be denied. There were happenings that we were a little ashamed of, but they were happenings that were inevitable. The wells were deep, and the ropes that drew up the leather buckets had cut gashes in the trunks of dead palm trees that protected the watering places. And for these ropes we fought furiously.

Once while wrestling with a nomad for possession of a rope, Ahmed Mansour slipped into the terrible hole and was only saved by clinging to the leather bucket that was dropped down after him. He was a very mad wrestler when he came to the surface; and the Berber who had pushed him into the pit was taught a lesson.

In the matter of food it was the same. If anyone wished to sell, we bought and paid double; but if they wouldn't sell, we took what we wanted and flung the money at them. "Do they think we should starve to death, when we have fine money to give them?" cried Thurland, when Anastasia made a comment on the high-handed manner in which things were done. "Dates and meal and meat have the devils, but they won't sell a ha'porth."

"They're frightened they'll starve if they sell their little stores," said Anas-



Africa had us—
the way she has
had thousands.

tasia. And that was the truth. But Thurland couldn't listen to any criticisms upon his conduct. Neither could Flane.

It was this freebooting business that got us into trouble. We came to a little village whose people didn't wish anything to do with us. They fired shots over our heads to warn us off, but we had to have food. And in the night the hairy man and Ahmed Mansour crept up to the walls of the village and stole a goat that was tied to a stake.

It was a skinny goat, but it must have been a prize in the village. For the moment they found it was gone,—and that was immediately the hairy man and Ahmed Mansour reached our camp with the animal,—every man, woman and child of the village came after us.

We struck camp and moved away from them, but they followed. And they made a whining noise that was dreadful to listen to. We were moving over a stony plain to a rocky defile, and the stones cut the pads of the camels, and we couldn't move faster than the villagers who walked and ran after us.

THURLAND threw them fine bills of the Banque d'Etat du Maroc, but they tossed the bills away after they took a look at them—tossed them away in temper, and the wind blew the printed bits of paper across the plain. And the people whined and whined, so that the air was full of their lamentations. All for the matter of a skinny goat!

At first they did nothing but run along and whine at us; but when they found that did no good, one of them fired a rifle, and the shot struck the leg of the slave girl. The poor devil fell from her camel and screamed with the pain and fear that came to her. And while we stopped to look after her, another bullet

struck the long neck of the hairy man's camel and brought it kicking and screaming to the ground, the rider getting mixed up in the brute's legs so that he didn't feel quite himself when he got free of them.

Thurland and Flane were madmen now. They jumped from their camels, and revolver in hand, they rushed the mob that was pursuing us. And the mob saw the deviltry on the faces of them and broke, running in all directions.

"Get the girl on her camel!" shouted Flane, and we lifted the poor girl onto the beast, the dwarf climbing up beside her to hold her there. The hairy man mounted the camel of the dwarf, and with the mob whining and the girl screaming, we hurried toward the rocky defile, my uncles on foot, faces to the pursuing mob, protecting us.

INTO the pass, which was narrow and walled on both sides, we moved; and there, being safe for the moment, we halted to see what we could do. We lifted the girl to the ground, and Flane examined her leg, she moaning with the pain of it. And the hairy man was groaning a lot, for the big foot of the camel had swatted him in the stomach.

We were in a fine mess. Two injured people, and the whining mob stumbling after us. And now and then a bullet whizzed over our heads, and the sun blazed down on us, and the rocks were so hot that they bit through the soles of our shoes like scorpions.

"We can't stay here," said Flane. "We must move on or they'll get us, one after the other." Then to Thurland he said: "Go ahead with the rest, and I'll hold these devils till you are well out of the way. Get the girl on her camel and move."

But the slave girl screamed and protested when we tried to lift her back on the camel. Five times we hoisted her up, but she flung herself down again, and at last we gave up the struggle. The hairy man was on the ground, rubbing his stomach where the camel had landed with his big foot; and when he saw that the slave girl wouldn't go forward with us, he spoke to my uncles.

"I'll hold the pass," he said. "Leave the girl here with me. I'm hurt in my inside."

My uncles argued with the hairy man, but he was stubborn. He said that he felt death, and all the talking in the world wouldn't change him. He got to

his feet, walked to the spot where the slave girl was moaning, took her hand and spoke to her. She stopped her outcries and looked up at him with her big soft eyes; and we saw then what we hadn't noticed before: They loved each other, loved each other greatly.

"Give me," said the hairy man, "the spare camel and go on."

"They'll kill you," argued Flane.

"I'm going to die, so what matter?" said the hairy man. "I'll hold them back for an hour or two; then I'll make a deal with them. I'll give them the camel if they'll nurse the girl. Do what I say. March on. I'm as good as dead."

He sat down beside the girl, and he shut his ears to all arguments. And the girl seemed happy. So there we left them.

Anastasia wept as we rode forward up the slope of the rocky defile. It wasn't nice leaving the girl and the hairy man, but there was nothing else to do. Nothing at all.

The faces of Thurland and Flane were grim as we pushed on. Africa was fighting us; she had us now where we couldn't get away from her, and it looked as if she was going to show us what she really could do with foolish people who took liberties with her.

From the top of the stony pass we looked back. The hairy man was on his knees, his body thrown forward over a protecting ledge of rock, and he was firing an occasional shot at the crowd that milled around the entrance to the pass—firing over their heads, I think, he not wishing to hurt them, having in mind the girl whose life he was going to buy with the gift of the camel and the rifle.

We rode over the top of the hill and lost sight of them. No one spoke. Our thoughts were of the two, and of the sudden discovery that they loved each other. A strange thing is love.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM CLEOPATRA'S MINES

WHEN the *grande chaleur* came down on us, we made camp in the bed of a dried-up torrent. There were a few stunted palms and a bit of grass for the camels, and from a patch of white sand there bubbled up clear water.

The blessed miracle of the wastes! We cupped our hands and drank eagerly, kneeling around the tiny spring. And

the song of the water was sweet music—sweeter than any other I have ever heard.

"The palm trees have cried to Allah, and Allah has sent them water," said Ahmed Mansour.

MY Uncle Flane, who was spiteful on account of the trouble that morning, contradicted him. "The water was here before the palm trees," said Flane. "How could they grow if there was no water here?"

"They knew that Allah would send it," said the wrestler, he thinking it romantic to have the palm trees praying.

"Could they grow without water?" sneered Flane.

"If Allah willed," snapped the Arab.

"You are mad," cried Flane. "The heat has got into your head and dried up the small bit of brain that you had when I wrestled with you on the roof."

Ahmed Mansour lost his temper, but Thurland jumped between the pair of them. "What the devil is wrong with you?" shouted Thurland. "Who cares whether the trees or the water were here first? Will you stop your damned arguments and let us rest! Do you wish to frighten Anastasia with your fool bel-lowings?"

The Arab sulked and walked away, while Thurland and Flane got out the map and studied it, the one-eyed Moor watching them curiously, he knowing nothing of maps or of latitude and longitude. Now, as I write, I have before me the map that my uncles pored over on that hot afternoon, and on it is a circle made with a pencil that marked our position. Any map of the Rio de Oro or Sahara Occidental shows the spot—or I should say, they don't show the spot, it being a white strip on the map in the *Saguiet el Hamra*, a trifle above the twenty-sixth degree of north latitude, and in a line with Cape Bojador, two hundred miles to the westward. And if anyone tells you casually that they were ever there, you can doubt them. Ay, you can doubt their word, the way Teddy Brannigan doubted the devil when Satan met him coming home from Kenmare Fair and offered to make him King of Ireland in return for his soul. For few men invade the *Saguiet el Hamra*, and they have good reason for keeping clear of it.

"We have come a long way, Jimmy," said Thurland.

"A long way from Kerry," I said.

"From Kerry?" repeated Thurland, and he looked puzzled. "From Kerry? Where in hell's name— By the beard of Brian Boru, I had forgotten! That's queer. That's queer indeed. When you mentioned Kerry, Jimmy, for a minute—a single minute—I couldn't remember where it was."

I was startled at my uncle's having forgotten Kerry for an instant, and he saw that I was startled. "It's nothing, Jimmy," he said quickly. "I have seen so many places that they get mixed up in my brain. Scores and scores of places. . . . You'd better go and speak to Anastasia. She's a little sad."

I WENT and sat beside Anastasia; we looked at the mirages and talked in whispers. We watched the lakes that didn't exist at all, and the towers that were made of heated air, and the lurid light that hung over the desert—watched the wonder of it till the terror that springs from the unconquered heart of Africa nestled in our breasts. Her fingers groped for mine to find comfort, and they were cool and beautiful. Trying to make her forget the dread, I told her stories of Kerry—stories of John Trench, who went back through the

flames to save the chief engineer and was blinded in the attempt; of Paddy Grogan, who talked to the fairies on the little lonely roads; of Mary Shaughnessy, who didn't have the fare to Dublin to see her lover who was dying, and who borrowed the tiny shoe of a leprechaun to ride on, the shoe being of snakeskin, remaining always in the air on account of the curse that Saint Patrick put on snakes.

"But how did she make it go to Dublin?" asked Anastasia.

"She spread out her skirts to catch the breeze that blows in from the Atlantic," I said. "All the people saw her as she flew over the Galty Mountains, and the good folk riding in the trains waved to her."

"I wish, Jimmy, that we had some little shoes made out of snakeskin," whispered Anastasia.

"They'd be no good here," I said. "It's only because the skin of a snake can't land on Irish soil that they're good. That's why the leprechauns wear them, and—"

I didn't finish my remark, because a rifle cracked out on the hot sands, and a bullet struck a rock about a yard from the spot where we were sitting.





They were not stones at all—they were the heads of men, left to die!

Thurland shouted to us, and we dropped to the ground, flattening ourselves behind the trunks of two palm trees. Another bullet clipped a frond above our heads, and my Uncle Thurland was mad with temper as he, Flane, Ahmed Mansour, the dwarf and the one-eyed man scurried round looking for shelter.

We lay quiet and waited. I squinted between the trunks of the two palms, but I could see nothing. Five minutes passed; then a puff of smoke rose from behind a red rock far out on the sand, and another bullet sang as it whistled over us.

Thurland and Flane whispered together; then Flane wriggled back from the palm clump, crawling on all fours up the dried-up bed of the torrent, pulling his rifle with him. Like a big serpent he dragged himself along, while we waited, our eyes on the red rock.

Another whiff of smoke rose, and a bullet struck the trunk of a palm tree.

"The mad devil!" growled Thurland, who had the glasses trained on the rock. "The unmannerly wretch, to blaze away at us when we've done him no harm! If Flane moves to the westward, he'll get him for sure."

We had our eyes on the rock, and I kept thinking of Flane, who was creeping around the bank of the watercourse to get a shot at the fellow. For if Flane didn't get him, he would surely get us, or the camels who were hobbled a little distance in the rear of the palms. I was puzzled as to whether it was murder or manslaughter to shoot the man who was blazing at us.

THEN a rifle cracked to the westward, and we knew Flane had fired. An arm was flung up for an instant, so that we saw it over the top of the red rock, and we could see part of a burnous flapping in the wind where we had seen nothing before.

"Flane has got him!" cried Thurland. "I think I see the barrel of his rifle. It has fallen on the sand."

Through ten minutes of unholy silence we waited; then Flane came creeping back down the watercourse. "I think I hit him, by the way he crumpled up," he said. "He's by himself. I'll go out and see."

"Watch out! He might be shamming," said Thurland.

But Flane was taking no chances. He held his rifle ready, moving slowly, his

eyes upon the rock. The silence after the shooting was frightening. It seemed as if the shots had hurt the still air of the desert, and that now the jinn of the wastes were busy healing the wounds.

We watched Flane moving forward. Each time a camel grunted, our nerves twitched. He was within ten yards of the rock, within five; then he stopped, leaned forward and lowered his rifle.

FLANE turned toward the camp and beckoned. Thurland started at a run across the sand; and without asking permission, I followed.

My Uncle Thurland was bending over the man when I got to the rock. The stranger had fallen on his face, and when Thurland turned him over, we could see that he was still alive.

"He got it in the right chest," said Thurland. "Give a hand."

Flane and I helped to get the man into a comfortable position; and then when we straightened our backs for a moment, we saw the stone. Or I should say, it was then that the stone saw us, for that tremendous green eye flashed when the dying sunlight struck it, flashed in such a strange malevolent manner that we sprang back from it, thinking it alive. For all the stories of basilisks and toads wearing jewels in their heads sprang into our minds when the thing blinked wickedly.

It was an enormous emerald. An emerald—and this I know from what I have since heard and read—the like of which has not come since into the world. It was of great size, and it had a fire and brilliancy that was remarkable. For the moment we couldn't drag our eyes from it, though the owner of it was losing blood from the bullet-wound in his chest. There it was, stitched into a setting made of a piece of stiff dry hide; and this in turn was sewn onto a bag made of the skin of the white oryx, the bag hanging from the neck of the man, as is the custom of the Tuareg. With its great green eye it seemed to snarl at us, the way a dog would snarl who is guarding an injured master.

Thurland put out his hand to clutch the bag, but Flane stopped him. "He's alive," said Flane; and there was a queer note in his words. "Do we rob a man before his body is cold? Let be, brother o' mine, or the Almighty will smash us."

Flane knelt and undid the burnous and the jacket of the man. The *litham* of indigo cotton had fallen from his face,

and we could see his features. He was young, not more than twenty-five, and in a way, he was handsome. He had a well-shaped nose and a good mouth, and his chin was strong.

The one-eyed man, Ahmed Mansour and the dwarf were with us now, and Flane thought it best to take the man to our camp and see how his wound could be treated. Gently we carried him, though he was a murderous enemy till Flane stopped him; but the blazing eye on his breast watched us and roused mad thoughts in our minds as we carried him. For the eye, clutching at the last rays of the sun, seemed to show by the green hatred in its depths that it thought us robbers who longed to get it in our grasp. And that was the truth.

The bullet, so Flane found, had entered the right breast high up and had passed out beneath the shoulder-blade; and when Flane had finished his examination, the man opened his eyes and looked at us. By the light of the fire he studied us, his eyes shifting from one to the other, resting at last on the face of Anastasia, where he saw, perhaps, more sympathy than he found on the faces of the rest of us. He began to speak in the Temajegh tongue, faintly but clearly.

HIS home, so we understood, was about twenty-five kilometers west of our camp. His camel had died the day before; and when he saw us at the spring, to which he was heading, he had the bright idea of blazing away to frighten us, thinking he might get a stampeded camel to replace his own mount.

"And a fine murderous devil he is, to be sure," said Thurland. "To get a camel, he was willing to kill the lot of us!"

Flane laughed. "Well, he has something that will pay us for his tricks."

"Now that he's conscious and made his confession of guilt, I'll have a look at the stone," grinned Thurland. "I'm cross-eyed through trying to look at him and the emerald at the same time."

Thurland reached for the bag of white oryx skin, but the Tuareg tried to pull it out of his reach. Surly was the fellow, though we had dressed his wound and made him comfortable.

But the fingers of Thurland were terrible fingers, filled with a hunger that would not be denied. They took the bag from the neck of the Tuareg and carried it to the fire that we had built up out of the rotting fronds of the palms.

The stone clutched at the flickering firelight and stuffed the flames into its great green poisonous heart. We hardly moved or breathed. There was never another such stone in all the world. Never!

My Uncle Thurland took a knife from his belt, slit the setting of dried skin that held the thing, and let the naked stone drop onto the palm of his hand. And in its nakedness, with the dried pelt cut away, it was more terrible still—terrible in the pride and arrogance of it.

"This stone," said Thurland, "this stone, I'll wager, came from Cleopatra's Mines, that are in Jebel Zabara on the shores of the Red Sea, away to the east of Assuan."

The words ran through my brain, and I grew dizzy with the wonder of them and the sight of the great emerald: "Cleopatra's Mines that are in Jebel Zabara on the shores of the Red Sea!" Fine words. Splendid pompous words that slipped into our ears like honey into the mouth, words that had the pomp of the Great Book. And I thought of John Trench, and what he once said about the words of the Old Testament. "They're like a pillow of goose-down to the tired soul of me," said John Trench. "My ears lap at them the way a cat laps at milk."

Thurland passed the stone to Flane; Flane passed it to Anastasia and her white fingers dropped it into my palm. I was afraid of it—afraid because I thought it whispered of death and murder and bloody combats. For each of the great jewels of the world have a history of blood, a frightful history that trails after them. And when they are gathered together, as they sometimes are in the crowns of kings and emperors, they are whispering to each other and taking pride in the number that have died to hold possession of them. Strong brave men who killed to get them, and who were killed in their turn by lads that were stronger and quicker.

The palm of my hand thrilled as I held the stone. Fearful, I passed it to the one-eyed man, who passed it in turn to Ahmed Mansour and the dwarf, and the dwarf turned it back to Thurland.

WE had forgotten the Tuareg as we stood there. Now we turned and looked at him. He was sitting up, watching us, his eyes going from one face to the other, trying to read his fate. He had no doubts about who was going to hold the

emerald, and he was a little afraid that he would have his throat slit in the transfer.

He started to speak hurriedly, and the one-eyed man translated his words. He offered the emerald as a reward if Thurland would take him to his village. He thought that there might be a few smaller stones that he'd give as a bonus when we got him there.

"And a fine reception we'd get from his friends," said Thurland. "They'd be waiting for us when we carried this chap to them and let him have a chance to say that we shot him."

The Tuareg guessed at the objections Thurland would make, and he spoke hurriedly. His village, so he told the one-eyed man, had been deserted hurriedly by all the families that lived there, except his own. There remained in the camp only his mother, brother and sister.

"And why did the others clear out?" asked Thurland, suspicious of the queer tale.

IT was then that we heard in a scrappy fashion of the *Wâd Serr*, which is the Arabic for the Secret River, and of the *Akhel Foum*, or the Black Mouth.

This is how the story came to us: About a month before our meeting with the Tuareg, there had come strange noises out of the ground where the mud village had been built—terrifying rumblings that shook the ground. And they didn't stop, not for an instant. Night and day they went on, and the people, thinking the noises were made by the devils in the bowels of the earth, fled the place.

"Ask him," said Thurland, "have they found out what made the noises."

"He says that they hear water running under the village, so they think it is the *Wâd Serr*, that has changed its course," said the one-eyed man. "The *Wâd Serr* is the secret river that flows way down beneath the sands. He thinks it is the river that flows through the *Akhel Foum*."

When Thurland heard the words "*Akhel Foum*," he gave a hoarse cry of astonishment that startled Anastasia. The look on his face made us wonder greatly, and he grabbed the arm of the one-eyed man in his anxiety to hear more. "Quick!" he cried. "Ask him! Mother o' God! The *Akhel Foum* is the Black Mouth, and through the Black Mouth we go to the Woman with Golden Feet!"

The Tuareg nodded; he and his family thought the underground river was the one that flowed through the Black Mouth. He explained the reason for his being so far away from home. When his family became certain that the noises were caused by the river shifting its bed, he had set out after the deserting members of his tribe to tell them that there was nothing to fear. But his camel had died with the strange suddenness of camels, and he was walking back—when he stumbled upon our camp and thought to stampede us.

"The blessed angels in heaven have heard our prayers!" cried Thurland. "In heaven they have funny ways of getting things done, but they get them done. Now look at this business! By what a roundabout way have the saints made known to us the road to the Black Mouth!"

It seemed from the talk of Thurland and Flane that this Black Mouth was in all the stories of the Caravan Treasure, and the Woman with Golden Feet. Through it one entered her domain, and now we were near it. For the Tuareg, though he had never visited the place, or had never known anyone who had, it being thought an accursed spot, was certain it was not more than one hundred and seventy kilometers in a straight line southward from the village where he lived.

"But the emerald!" cried Thurland. "Some one of his tribe must have been to the place! This stone must have come from there!"

The Tuareg said that the emerald had been in his family for years. Where they got it, he couldn't tell.

"Well," laughed Thurland, "I'll take it without knowing its history, as Johnny Mullins said to the girl he married when he found her on the streets of Dublin. Tomorrow," he added, "we'll take this lad to his village and listen to the sounds that have frightened his people. If it's the river flowing through the Black Mouth, we're near our goal."

THE excitement clutched Thurland and Flane. There was a light in their dark Irish eyes that was the little child of madness. And although there were others to guard the Tuareg through the night—Ahmed Mansour, the dwarf, the one-eyed man, and myself—they chose to sit with him through the long hours of darkness.

The face of Anastasia was as cold and white as a snowy slope when I looked at

her in the dawn-light; and my own, so I thought, looked the same. For the nearness of the Black Mouth produced fear—fear of a kind that went leaching over your skin like cold water on a summer day. Looking to the southward I could see it in my fancy, it being only one hundred and seventy kilometers away, a little more than eighty Irish miles.

And I know that Thurland and Flane were picturing it. There they were, sitting on the sand, their faces turned to the south, squatting like two hounds that had run a dog-fox into his burrow.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECRET RIVER

WE lifted the injured Tuareg onto the camel of the dwarf and strapped him there. He was in pain, and a high fever was upon him; but he had courage, and not a grunt came from him. Not a grunt, for each time he looked at the eyes of Thurland he thought himself lucky to escape with his life. For the lust for plunder and loot had pushed any gentleness out of my uncle's eyes; and if before those eyes had looked like spearmen on a wall, they looked like armed devils as we rode off.

From time to time during the morning my uncle took the emerald from his pocket a few seconds to let it gulp the hot white sunlight—gulp it up so that we couldn't look at it. The terrible hunger of gems for the light!

I wondered about the stone as I thought over the words Thurland had uttered the night before. Wondered about its history from the time it was dug out of the crumbling stone at far-off Jebel Zabara. For the emerald that my uncle carried might have been handled by Cæsar and Antony, and seen the Nile and the great Sphinx that watches the sands! Ay, it might have hung on the white breast of Cleopatra when the poisonous asp crawled away after doing his deadly work.

And the thoughts that were in my mind were with Anastasia also. I thought that she showed fear of the great stone. Sidewise she looked at it when Thurland brought it out of his pocket—sidewise and with fear.

There was no halt during the hot morning. Our camels were in bad condition, but my two uncles did not care, for they were filled with a new enthusiasm that swept them forward.



In the early afternoon we sighted the camp, for camp it was, there being only nine mud huts and a couple of pancake tents made of hide and camel-hair cloth. We approached cautiously, not altogether certain that the Tuareg had told us the truth, but when we got within half a mile of the place, we had no doubt about the part of his tale that had to do with the secret river.

The sound came to us across the sand—a terrible droning sound, the like of which we had never heard before. It was a noise that might be made by a million camions moving over a stony road, and the fact that you couldn't see what was making the noise brought the most amazing thrills to us.

Louder and louder it rose as we came closer to the cluster of huts, and we didn't wonder why the people had fled the place. For brave hearts would falter before that noise. Out of the earth, the earth that ran away down to the cannibal islands on the other side of the world, came the thunder of doom! It might have been the millions in hell rioting to lift the door of the place.

We halted and stared at each other, our ears choked with the noises. The wet hand of fear was on us all, except Thurland and Flane.

"It's a river," shouted Thurland. "A great river that's swung into a new bed."

Flane nodded. "It's a stream bigger than the Shannon, or my name is not Spillane!" he cried.

FOR a few minutes we waited there, puzzled and frightened by the underground clamor, and a bit of verse that old Peter Brady had once recited to me slipped into my mind. It was written by an English poet named Coleridge, and

now I whispered it in an effort to kill the terror that was on me:

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree,
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,
Thro' caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.*

And many times during the days that followed did that scrap of wild verse come into my mind.

An elderly woman came out of one of the huts, and the young Tuareg with us made signals to her. A younger woman appeared, and then a man. There were no others in the place. The fellow's story was proving its truth.

We got the Tuareg down from the camel and carried him within the hut, he screaming out explanations. And the mother and sister and brother glared at Thurland when the Tuareg told them he had paid with the big emerald; but Thurland didn't bother with the fellow's talk. It was the bellowing of the underground river that interested him.

We walked around and looked at the empty huts. It was quite plain that the folk that had lived in them had left in a panic. In their hurry they had left

rugs and camel saddles behind them, and there were toys on the floor—little toys cut out of the wood of the dūm palm—that children must have been playing with when their mothers snatched them up and fled out onto the sands.

Flane stepped the portion of ground that seemed to quiver from the throbbing of the water. "It's eighty yards in width!" he shouted. "The devil's own amount of water is running along beneath us."

Thurland cornered the brother of the wounded Tuareg. The fellow was sulky. When the one-eyed man shouted questions about the Black Mouth, he pointed vaguely to the south.

"Ask him," shouted Thurland, "if he has ever heard of the Woman with Golden Feet."

The one-eyed man yelled the question, and a strange light came into the eyes of the Tuareg's brother. He looked at Thurland, then with a yelp of fear such as a dog would give if you trod on its tail, he dodged through the huts and ran full speed out onto the heat-bitten wastes.

In astonishment we watched. "That fellow knows something," shouted Flane.

"We should have put a rope on him," cried Thurland. "Come—we'll go on; nothing is to be gained by staying here. We'll follow the sound of the water. If it is the same river that flows through the Black Mouth, we are in luck."

We were jumpy and nervous as we went on, with the roar of the water leading us the way the radio beam guides airplane pilots nowadays. But we drove forward at a fierce pace, Thurland in the lead, sitting up straight in his saddle, his eyes staring ahead as if he expected to see the Black Mouth climb up over the red line that the setting sun had drawn on the sands.

At times we lost the sound of the river entirely, and then our ears drank deeply of the silence. Thurland explained this, when the first silence fell upon us. "It's dropped into a pool," he said. "An underground lake, perhaps. We'll pick it up farther on." He was right. Half a mile farther on the thunder came to us again. The river had passed through the lake and was again on its way, a fearsome footing over which our camels padded hurriedly, snarling at each other.

We came to a place of red rocks and there we made camp. The rocks were polished by the sands that had been thrown against them by the winds for hundreds of years, polished so that they



were like the smooth granite pillars in Kenmare church. And on some of them were carved inscriptions in the Tifinagh alphabet which is made up of circles and dots and squares and queer twisted lines. The one-eyed man tried to read it, but he could only make out a word here and there, and the words he did make out were not comforting. They were *thirst* and *death* and *sickness* and *murder*.

"It seems," said Flane, as the one-eyed man dug out more sorrowful expressions, "that the lads who did the writing were not boosters for the country." And that was a fact.

In the gloom the roar of the waters licked at our ears. And their noise carried Thurland outside of himself so that he made assertions that seemed to have no foundation to them, but which we had to believe. For my Uncle Thurland had a power that is not uncommon in the Irish. At times when he became greatly excited, he saw the morrow, saw it as plainly as he saw the folk who were sitting near him; and on this night by the red rocks, with the secret river rushing along the black gut it had made for itself, the spell was on him.

"I see the plunder of the centuries," he said, not looking at anyone of us as he spoke. "The great things that are so splendid that they cannot be lost. For they are like music and beauty and love, and they go on forever." . . .

And he spoke of conquerors that I had never heard of, who had marched with fire and sword over Africa. Of Massinissa, king of Numidia, who, so Thurland said, bit a piece out of his own hand when going into battle, so that he could fight with a fine temper. Of Abdel-Mumin, chief of the Almohades, who ran northern Africa from Tangier to the Egyptian border, and whose treasures of gold and silver were loaded on seven hundred camels. "And where is that treasure now?" cried Thurland.

Of a dozen others he spoke also, the mood being on him. There was one who ruled the very country we were passing through, a great caliph, who entered into correspondence with Queen Elizabeth, the great Queen Bess, who was then sitting on the throne of England, and he sent her presents of ivory and gold-dust. "He had a magic goblet that was always filled with wine," cried Thurland. "Never was it empty. He could swig away at it from morning till night on the hottest day, and it would be full when he went to bed!"



"If I could find that I would be happy," grinned Flane, but Thurland took no notice of the grin which his brother put into his words. He was thinking of all the wonderful things that had once been lying round loose in the world for brave men to grab at, but which had been lost through the centuries.

His words seemed to have sense in them; and he colored his stories so beautifully that we drank them in: For his sentences were twisted ribbons of flame; and when he paused for breath, there came the dull booming of the unseen river, and we felt the hot breath of Africa beating on our faces.

CHAPTER XIX

WE COME TO THE BLACK MOUTH

NOW it was a mad drive toward the Mouth, a wild forcing of tired camels. And the devil's music of the hidden river beat in our ears and made us mad. Every one of us, except Anastasia. For the stories that Thurland had told were like no other tales we had ever listened to, and they slopped and

slushed around in our brains like warm wine. But Anastasia was thinking only of the safety of Thurland.

Now and then Thurland would mutter aloud, and the words were jabbing spurs. "There are attics in every house where things are stored," he said. "Old things that folk have got tired of playing with. Old but valuable. Well, why shouldn't there be an attic for the whole world?" he cried. "An attic for the people of the earth? There is, there is! It is to that same attic we are going, or I'll eat the saddle that I'm sitting on. An attic in which are great gems and the great treasures—the Masque of Death, and the treasures of Byzantium and Bagdad and Memphis and Thebes and Carthage, and all the fine dead cities that died from eating and drinking and dancing, the way Paris and London and New York will die in their turn."

The river thundered louder, as though applauding my uncle. And Ahmed Mansour cracked the joints of his fingers, a thing he always did when he was excited. The dwarf whined.

In the heat haze I saw in fancy the seven hundred camels that carried the treasure of Abd-el-Mumin, the chief of the Almohades. And I wished for the load of only one camel to take back to the Green Tree Farm!

WE ate without halting. We were bits of fluff that the wind of desire was blowing along. And the white hard sunlight boiled our brains so that we saw things—things of dead days: elephants with howdahs on their backs and great golden cloths that blinded us. And running spearmen who shouted to us as they ran. And there were chariots with big prancing horses, whose copper-tinted drivers waved us on.

And we heard beautiful sounds that plaited themselves into the pounding of the secret river—sounds made with cymbals and trumpets of silver and flutes....

The dwarf fell from his camel, and Thurland cursed him. Hurriedly we slopped water over the face of the little fellow, pushed him back again on his mount and went on, with Ahmed Mansour riding close to him lest he fall again. Africa had us, the way she has had thousands and thousands that have been drawn to her big black breasts. Sprawling there in the hot sunshine she calls, and the fools come.

We slipped from our camels when the sun like a molten penny dropped into the

sands. We couldn't talk, and we couldn't eat. We could only gargle our dry mouths with the warm smelly water from the goatskin bags and stare at each other, wondering whether the things we saw were the things the others saw.

"The dwarf will die," whispered Ahmed Mansour.

"That would be foolish of him," said Thurland quietly. "To die when he is close to treasure that will make him the richest dwarf in Africa is foolish. Tell him to hang on."

But in the night the little man gave up the ghost. And with him on his trip to the unknown went the camel of Flane. I think we thought it lucky that if a camel had to go, that a rider should go with him, and this shows the mood we were in, the mad selfish mood that the devil had put upon us.

AT first wash of daylight we were up and off. "Today," said Thurland,—and his voice was raised as if he were challenging the jinn of the wastes,— "today we shall see the Black Mouth! I know it! The feel of it is in my bones."

To me and to Anastasia it meant death if we didn't. For the fatigue and the heat were killing us. I lost count of time. I clung to the Agades cross that made the pommel of the saddle, but I saw nothing. At times the soft voice of Anastasia would come to my ears, but I wasn't sure if she was speaking or whether I imagined it.

That husky throbbing voice of Thurland's roused me. It would rouse a mummy that had been sleeping for a thousand years. It was filled with a terrible joy. "The Black Mouth!" cried Thurland. "Christ's woes! Look at it! Look at it, will you? Straight before you! The Mouth! *The Black Mouth!*"

My Uncle Thurland had seen the Kaaba at Mecca, he being one of the few Christians who, wearing disguise, had entered the great holy city of Islam. And on that afternoon, as we came closer to the Black Mouth, he told us that there was a great resemblance between the Kaaba and the big rock of black basalt in which was the Mouth itself.

"And there might be something in that resemblance that made the Arab plunderers choose this as a treasure-chamber," he said. "Something that reminded them of home."

The rock reared itself out of the sands as if startled at our approach. When we were within a hundred yards of it, we

halted and stared at it with our sand-tormented eyes.

We had lost the sound of the river, it having dug itself deeper into the earth, and the silence was like one of those fine transparent jellies that you see in shop windows, holding us there as the jelly holds the cooked partridge or the pheasant that it is poured over. That's a fact. For we had come up against the very core of the desert, the core of the heat and the loneliness and the despair. We knew it was in the black rock with the great slit in the face of it, the slit that was called the *Akkel Foum*.

Flane, with an effort, broke the jelly of silence that held us imprisoned. "You'd expect," he said, pushing the quiet with his big voice, "you'd expect something to come out of that black mouth in the rock. A big serpent, or a dragon, or something."

"The something might be asleep," muttered Thurland, and there was a catch in his voice as if the finger of fear had pressed on his Adam's apple.

We sat there like a lover who has galloped over the countryside to see his sweetheart and who is struck with a terrible fear when he reaches the garden gate. Sat there till the shadow of night came creeping over the desert; then we roused ourselves and made camp. But we ate nothing. And we couldn't lay ourselves down to sleep, although one advised the other, and the other gave the same advice back. We sat with our backs against the camel saddles, our faces toward the spot where the rock had faded into the night, and we were quiet and speechless lest it might hear us, and we hated the camels when they snarled and grumbled, for the noises they made gave our position away.

I CREPT close to Anastasia. . . . Out there in the night was something monstrous—that even to look at was a sin, something that had the grisly feel of those man-eating plants that grow in the jungles of the Malay. We were close to a *Frankenstein's* monster in stone.

I started to whisper something to my Uncle Thurland, but he said "Hush!" and I stopped. Thurland was listening—listening to the trickling sands that the Arabs say talk to each other in the silence of the night, so that something that happens on one side of the great Desert of Sahara is carried by the whispering dunes across two thousand miles of sand and breathed into the ears of

clever men on the other side. It is the only explanation of the known fact that gossip beats the telegraph in lost places.

THE rock shook itself out of the gray mist of the morning like a black dog coming out of the water, and the sun hit it squarely, knocking sparks out of the basalt. And the twisted mouth of it grinned at us, and at times the quivering sunlight gave the slit the appearance of motion so that we thought it might be speaking to us.

Thurland spoke to us as we gobbled down a little food. "We must go slow, for we know nothing of what is inside the cavern," he said. "Caution is the thing just now. Flane and I will have a peep while the rest of you wait here. After we look around, we will make plans."

We watched my two uncles as they walked up the rocky slope that led to the Black Mouth. It was then, as they stood there, staring at the rock, that I gathered some idea of the size of the Black Mouth. It was, so I guessed, about thirty feet in height, but not more than four feet in width. And the top of it sloped toward the east, giving it the appearance, as I have said, of a mouth put on sideways.

For long minutes my uncles stood staring at the wall; then Flane turned and cried out for Ahmed Mansour and the one-eyed man. The Arab wrestler and the Moor went at a run up the slope, leaving Anastasia and me alone.

"What have they seen, Jimmy?" she whispered.

"Inscriptions," I said. "They're staring at the rock as if something is written there. P'raps it's a warning."

"It's dreadful," she breathed.

After twenty minutes that seemed twenty years the wrestler and the one-eyed man turned and started back to us. Thurland and Flane thrust their heads forward into the mouth; then they stepped within. Anastasia gave a little cry of fear, and with difficulty I choked back a yelp of sheer terror.

The two men came running to our side, and Ahmed Mansour explained. On the rock beside the opening were many inscriptions in Arabic and in the queer Tifinagh script. The Arabic was easy to read, but the Tifinagh was difficult. The biggest and most easily read was a verse from the Koran. The wrestler repeated it to us. It was from the chapter called "The Merciful" and ran:



O company of jinn and men, if ye can overpass the bounds of the Heavens and the Earth, then overpass them. But by our leave only shall ye overpass them.

Not for an instant while the Arab was speaking did we take our eyes from the opening through which Thurland and Flane had disappeared. Now in a half-circle we sat and stared at the crooked mouth in the wall of stone. The world stopped as the minutes passed. The mouth spat terror in our faces the way the flat-headed snakes spit their poison—terror that got into our blood.

AN hour passed, two, three. Then, when a terror had us by the throat, my two uncles dived suddenly into the sunlight as if thrown by a force from within.

They turned and looked back at the Black Mouth, the way a man would look who had gained a fence with a bull at his heels. And that backward stare was the very pantomime of horror.

Quietly, under control now, Thurland and Flane climbed down the rocky slope and walked toward us. On our feet we waited for them.

Thurland spoke. "We've done a bit of exploring," he said. "Not much. It's dark in there, and we could only see by the flashlight. We found a few things." He paused and looked at Flane.

I broke the silence.

"Treasure, Uncle?" I gurgled.

"No, Jimmy," answered Thurland. "No treasure. We saw a few of the fellows who have been here before us."

"Dead?" I cried.

"Dead," said Thurland.

There was a long interval of silence. The eyes of Anastasia, the one-eyed man, Ahmed Mansour, and myself were upon my two uncles, begging for details, but Thurland and Flane had evidently made up their minds to say little lest they alarm Anastasia.

"WE'LL have something to eat, then we'll make plans," said Flane. "It's a big job." He turned and stared at the Black Mouth. "Yes, a big job," he added. "If it wasn't, the stuff would have been taken away a thousand years ago. There's hardly a tomb in the pyramids of Egypt that hasn't been looted, so why should this be untouched, even if it is here in the loneliest part of God's earth?"

We made a meal of dates, millet cakes and a bit of dried camel flesh; and while we ate, we stared at the Black Mouth. And as the sun wheeled, so did the shadows move around the opening, and the grin that we thought was there changed with each minute. But it was always a leer—a cunning leer that told us plainly to go back to where we came from: to the little clusters in the world where men put the smug cloak of civilization around their shoulders and think they're safe.

"Now," said Thurland, when we had finished our meal, "there is work to do. And we might have been wiser if we had brought more things than we have. It is as black as the hobs of hell in there. We have the big flashlight and a lot of refills, but that's nothing. A mile back, we passed some dried rushes. We must get them, tie them into bundles and grease them with camel fat. And we must unravel every inch of rope that we can spare and make a string that will reach a mile. Perhaps two miles, for the Lord only knows how far we will have to go before we reach anything valuable. Do you know why the fellows that went in there died?"

No one spoke; so Thurland went on. "They couldn't find the mouth when they wanted to come back," he said. "They were lost in the great darkness of the place. There's a twist in the rock the moment you get inside, and it closes the hole. It nearly had Flane and myself. You might have seen us jump through? Well, it was joy and fear, for we were an hour or more going round and round like flies in a bottle looking for the mouth. It is for that reason we want the long string. Now we'll get busy."

Ahmed Mansour and the one-eyed man went back after the dried rushes; and when they brought them, we tied them in bundles and dipped them in camel grease. And the Black Mouth watched us. We unraveled the camel ropes and made a mile of strong string which Thurland tested, going over every yard of it with his strong fingers. "For if this broke, we'd never see Kerry again," he said. "It will be the thread of life to us the moment we are a yard from the mouth. Tomorrow is the birthday of my blessed mother who is in heaven, and I hope she has a minute or two to make a prayer for me. For it's fine prayers we'll need. Ay, prayers with a pull in them!"

We were tired when the night came down, and the big rock slipped into the darkness. Silent were the six of us as we sat beside the pile of dried rushes and the coil of twine. And we seemed so lonely and helpless before the thing that Kerry came down out of the north to comfort me with pictures—pictures of the Green Tree Farm and the big wide hearth with the peat burning brightly, the kettle singing a song of tea, and Cromwell, the black cat that loved Anastasia, nodding his head to the tune.

I fell asleep and dreamed a frightful dream. I thought that the basalt rock had moved down on us while we slept, and that out of the Black Mouth had come an enormous tongue that licked us into its depths.

CHAPTER XX

COINS OF PTOLEMY AND DARIUS

NOW, the one-eyed man did something that shook our nerves on the morning of the day my uncles entered the Black Mouth. He bowed toward the Black Mouth as if it were a lord and master that he was making obeisance to, and he spoke.

"I am not going within the thing," he said to Thurland, speaking in his own tongue.

"Why?" asked Thurland, who had already chosen the one-eyed man as a companion for himself and Flane, having decided that Ahmed Mansour and I should remain in camp with Anastasia.

"I fear death," said the Moor.

Thurland looked at him for a moment without speaking; then he turned to Flane and spoke in a whisper. Flane looked at the wrestler, and the wrestler looked back at him in the haughty ar-

rogant manner that we noticed when we had first seen him bawling his challenges to the world at Marrakech.

"When I wrestled with you," Flane said, "you told me you had made a vow on the Koran that you would follow the man that beat you. Follow him to the ends of the earth! Now is your chance."

Possibly my uncles had noticed something in the manner of Ahmed Mansour when he had read the Arabic inscription on the rock, something that made them think he would not like the adventure. For the words of Flane were a challenge to the wrestler's pride, a challenge that he understood.

"I made the vow," he answered, "made it on the Koran; but now the Koran forbids. It is written on the rock. It is a warning. I am afraid."

Flane grinned. "I don't blame you!"

THURLAND put the coil of twine on his shoulder and pointed to the reed bundles. "Well, carry these and the food up to the mouth," he said, addressing the wrestler and the one-eyed man. "My brother and I will go alone. You two and Jimmy will stay to guard the lady."

He kissed Anastasia; and with Flane at his shoulder, they walked toward the mouth, the wrestler and the Moor following with the bundles of greasy reeds, and the food and water.

Like Anastasia, I had tears in my eyes as I watched them.

Anastasia put a hand on my shoulder. "Jimmy," she whispered, "if—if you were with him, you might stop him from doing mad things. Don't you think so?"

I couldn't answer her. *If I were with him!* With him—in the Black Mouth! Terror sprang upon me. I looked at the four climbing the stony ramp.

Anastasia stooped down and kissed me, then with a gentle push she spoke. "Go with him, Jimmy! Watch him! Guard him! He is my life!"

And her kiss drove the fear from me.

I was panting when I caught up with Thurland and Flane. They were on a rocky platform immediately before the Black Mouth.

"What is it?" snapped Thurland.

"Anastasia—Anastasia ordered me to go with you!" I cried. "She told me to go!"

"Go back and stay with her!" snapped Thurland. "Do you think I would leave her with—" He stopped and looked down at the camp where Anastasia was

standing. She waved her hand as if urging him to take me on the expedition. He cursed softly and whispered to Flane.

"Let me go!" I cried, seeing that he was weakening. "She says—she says I'm to go to keep you from doing—from doing mad things!"

HE couldn't control the grin brought by my words, and I knew I had won. He turned to the wrestler and the one-eyed man. Softly, but with a sternness that was steel itself, he gave them their instructions. Night and day they must guard Anastasia, and if they failed, he would cut them in strips and give their flesh to the bald-headed vultures when he returned.

There was silence for a moment; then the wrestler spoke. "If you don't return?" he said quietly.

Thurland stared at him, and the Arab quailed before the cold eyes. "There are lots of folk in many parts of the world who thought I wouldn't return when I went on little journeys," said Thurland, "but it's a habit I have of coming back. And when I come back, I always have a settling. A hard settling." He waved to Anastasia and entered the Black Mouth, Flane at his heels, I following with a bundle of greased reeds. And the black night was hurled at us.

Thurland was speaking. "Here we'll tie one end of the string," he said, "and we'll pay it out as we go along."

So, immediately within the entrance, Thurland knotted one end of the cord to a rocky tooth, keeping the coil on his shoulders. This done, we set a match to one of the greasy torches, and the light of it battled with the thick murk of the place. A little David of a light fighting with the Goliath of gloom that had his headquarters in that place.

Dark and cold was that place after the blazing sun without. And there was a smell of death in the thick air. And when one of us whispered a word, the roof of the place high up above our heads caught the word and mocked us.

"Keep close to us," cautioned Flane. "Follow the light. Now we are going forward."

The floor of the place sloped downward; and as we went forward, the flashlight showed that the cavern was getting wider. The sides were slipping away from us, and at points the seeking light failed to find them, there being new openings from the main chamber packed full of the same fine breed of gloom.

The light bit at something on the floor in front of us. It was a body, or, more truthfully, it was a mummy, for the years and the dryness of the cavern had left but bones and skin. His head was turned away from the Mouth, and it looked as if he had died seeking an opening into the sunlight.

Five yards beyond him was another; and when we slipped down a steep incline there was a third. The light danced on them as they lay stretched out on the floor, their skeleton hands flung out in a wild sort of way.

"Mother of God!" muttered Flane. And as if carried by a chain of mocking parrots the words "Mother of God!" echoed ahead of us; and we listened till the last cry came to us from a point that seemed a mile or more ahead of us.

THE echoes kept us quiet, and in silence we followed the flashlight, Thurland paying out the cord carefully. Flane stumbled, and Thurland turned the flashlight on the object he had tripped over. We sprang aside, for we thought in the first instant that the two men sitting back to back were alive. Back to back they sat, supporting each other as is the manner of the legionnaires in the desert where there is nothing to lean against; and their position was so lifelike that we were careful. But dead as Brian Boru were the pair of them. Dead, yet holding the position they had taken up when they felt their last moments had arrived.

Now when Flane stumbled over the legs of one of the men, he must have disturbed the fine balance that kept them erect through the years; for lo and behold, as we stared at them, they parted company, one rolling in one direction and the other rolling in the opposite. Quietly they fell to the ground, they that had been sitting up, back to back, for years. In the silence there rose the soft tinkle of coins, and from the gaudy sash of the one whose gray beard fell to his waist, came the sound that was like soft music to our ears: the music of gold.

Thurland dropped to his knees, and his hands undid the big sash of the dead man. Within the sash was a pocket, and from that pocket my uncle brought out a small handful of gold coins. The light showed them like a little bunch of crocuses, on Thurland's big palm. Gold crocuses that had been for hundreds and hundreds of years in the darkness of the great cavern.

Now I should tell here of some of those coins. It is possible that you may have seen one or two of them, for they are to be seen today. In the big British Museum in London you will find one of them if you care to look, and this is the description of that same coin which the men who know about such things put to it when it was offered to the museum. They said it was a gold *stater* of the reign of Ptolemy, struck about three hundred years before the birth of our Lord. And the head on one side of it (and this is their own words) is the head of Ptolemy himself, while the man on the other side riding in the chariot drawn by four elephants is no one else but Alexander the Great. And how they found that out is a mystery to me. There are three others of that handful that now sit on plush cushions in the great Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris; and they have thrilling stories about themselves printed on the little white tags beside them. They are, say the men they call numismatists, gold *dinars* that were struck in Egypt by the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mamun over a thousand years ago, and this Al-Mamun was the son and ultimate successor of old Haroun-al-Raschid that you have read of in the Arabian Nights. Clever lads are the boys who study coins.

And a great millionaire in New York, whether Morgan or Rockefeller I don't know, bought two others that were the most beautiful coins that were ever minted, and I doubt if there are any others like them in the whole world. They are two big gold-pieces that the experts who have examined them think were coined by Darius Hystaspis in Lydia about twenty-four hundred years ago, and the sight of them would make your teeth water, the glow and the beauty and the warmth of them. They too sat in the palm of my uncle, and smiled at him in the way that gold smiles up at you.

IN a whisper Thurland spoke, being afraid of the mocking echoes in the roof of the place. "They're as old as the Devil's Causeway!" he gasped, knowing that much from the rough way in which they were finished. "Didn't I tell you, my brother, that this was the attic of the world?"

He handed the coins to Flane and then went over the clothes of the other man, who was younger, but he found nothing.

"It is the old that grab the booty," said Thurland, and the echoes grabbed the word "*booty*" as if it was a new word to them altogether, and they sent it flying in front of us.

Thurland got to his feet and turned the flashlight on my face. I tried to close my mouth that the fear had opened, but I couldn't. Flane took my hand and we moved forward, Thurland paying out the rope.

Thurland was fair gurgling with joy. He saw himself with the fine clothes and the castle, and the fast horses that he would breed to win the Derby and the Grand National. And he saw himself being taken up to the royal box at the great Epsom course, and some one saying to the King: "This is Mr. Thurland Spillane of Ireland, the owner of the winner." For Thurland, like all the Irish, was always stepping out on the stilts of imagination and building dream palaces that the fist of reality knocked over when it banged them brutally.

WE had gone half a mile or more when Flane thrust out a hand and stopped us. Free from the noise of our shoes on the floor of the cavern, our ears reached out and brought a new sound to us: the roar of the hidden river we had been following for three days!

The noise increased. Thurland flung the beam of light forward as if he expected to see the roaring wall of water sweeping down on us, but the light sprang away into the darkness and we breathed again. We had evidently turned a bend in the cavern and that made the noise more noticeable.

And then—the light that danced ahead of us suddenly lost the floor on which it ran.

It dipped into an abyss, disappeared for an instant, then sprang up on the far side of the rift, sprang up weaker and paler as if the sudden jump through space had frightened it. Thurland shouted and dropped to his knees, dragging at my legs as he did so and bringing me down beside him. And Flane had dropped too. There we lay in a clump like caterpillars in the springtime, a little beside ourselves with the sudden knowledge what had come upon us: We were on the very edge of an abyss—the abyss out of which came the angry roar of waters being slathered to foam on rocks far below.

How our adventurers found the Woman with Golden Feet, and the parlous events that then befell, is set forth in the concluding chapters of this colorful chronicle—in our forthcoming July issue.

What the Cat Brought In

By E. H. SMITH

NEVER have a disagreement with a cat. A mule, if he takes a dislike for you, can do no more than kick the daylights out of you; a dog can only take a bite out of your leg; and a bull in his meanest moments can only scatter your remains around the field after goring, pawing and messing you up in general. Take it from me, a cat, without baring a claw or fang, can ruin the disposition of a saint, make a trembling coward of a brave man and wreck the constitution of a man of iron! After one experience I still have the jitters at the sight of a mewling kitten.

It happened in the Mexican state of Sonora, where my buddy, an old prospector, and I were trying to show a profit on mining, milling and concentrating forty-ounce ore, the concentrates of which had to be packed forty miles as the burro walks to the nearest town and railroad. If the expense of handling had not been greater than the returns, we still figure that we might have made a fortune.

Bill, the prospector, owned the cat. According to Bill, who raised him from a kitten, Smoky was possessed of all the desirable qualities ever attributed to a feline. Previous to Bill's departure to the United States in an effort to raise more funds with which to continue work at the mine, he was just a common cat, to be treated tolerantly and scarcely noticed by my partner and me. In the four months that Bill was gone, loneliness and boredom developed our friendship toward him. Right here let me advise you never to treat a cat as your equal. Feed him, to be sure, and attend to his personal comfort, but never let him become too intimate. Above all, don't drink with him. It was drinking that brought our downfall—not our drinking, but that of the cat.

Weeks and weeks of waiting for Bill's return, scanning the cañon road by day and listening for a car at night, had become monotonously unbearable, when a Mexican rancher from the valley, who packed our grub from town to us when

we needed it, ran short of coffee and beans and came to trade us fresh milk and eggs for the things he needed. He brought as a gift two quarts of mescal.

Milk—liquor—eggs. In any man's language it spells eggnog. After the Mexican had gone and the third drink had been taken, our boredom vanished. After the fourth, we had stopped sympathizing with ourselves. On the fifth we were looking for some one with whom to sympathize, when Smoky walked into the house looking as disconsolate and woebegone as if the world were not a place where dreams always come true. Who would selfishly refuse to raise a pal from such depths of despondency?

We gave him a drink in a saucer. He lapped it up appreciatively, and demanded that he be included on the next round, which he took like a gentleman.

He had not consumed more than half a pint when his despondent look was replaced by one of profound and somewhat exaggerated dignity—reminiscent, when he walked, of an old and palsied judge. When after a few more drinks that look had faded into an insipid grin, and he had mistaken his tail for a varmint which he bravely attempted to destroy by tooth and nail, I objected to his drinking further. I pointed to the fact that a gentleman who cannot hold his liquor without making a dunce of himself should not be allowed to drink excessively. My buddy smashed that argument on two counts—first, neither of the observers were in any condition to judge drunkenness; and secondly, an individual is more capable of judging his own capacity than are others.

After that, Smoky's moral disintegration was fast. Let it suffice to say that he climbed up on the rafters, leered at us contemptuously and yowled like a demon—that he staggered tipsily, played kittenishly and imagined that he was beset by all the tomcats in the world. He positively seemed to be enjoying himself

REAL EX-

Truth may be as interesting—and as strange — as fiction. And for this reason we print each month a group of true stories by our readers. (For details of this Real Experience contest see page 3). First we have the surprising story of a cat who took a diabolic revenge on his betrayers.



until something he had eaten made him sick, and he wobbled to the fireplace to lie down.

Thirty minutes later Elliott noticing that Smoky had passed out dangerously near the fire, and reaching out, grasped a very limber and lifeless cat. He informed me that our old pal Smoky was dead. After a closer examination I grasped the beast firmly by the tail and tossed him out into the darkness.

Glumly we went to bed.

A car rattling and bumping up the rocky cañon road leading to our shack awakened us a couple of hours later. Joyously we piled out of bed and greeted Bill, and a stranger he had brought with him to look over our holdings and perhaps invest enough money to carry on the work.

After the fire had been rekindled and coffee made, Elliott and I were anxious to turn the conversation to mining; but the stranger, Mr. Wines, would have none of it.

"The first thing I want to see," he demanded, "is Bill's cat. I've heard of practically nothing but that cat all the way down here."

I looked at Elliott.

Elliott looked at me.

A great truth began to dawn on us.

When, after an embarrassing silence, it became apparent that my buck-passing partner did not intend to say anything I managed, in what I hoped was a conversational tone, to surmise that he was somewhere about the place.

"Yeah," said Elliott weakly. "Sometimes he goes out at nights to catch mice around the mill. He'll probably—"

At that moment a somewhat blowsy-looking but decidedly alive Smoky poked his head into the firelight and stood blinking like an evil spirit summoned from the dead.

"What's the matter with him?" Bill demanded, cradling the bedraggled beast in his arms.

Elliott was making strange gurgling noises. With an effort he controlled himself long enough to opine that the cat "did look sort of bad."

"I noticed that he didn't look very well this evening," I agreed.

Mr. Wines appropriately said nothing.

Bill finally decided that Smoky had become sick from eating lizards; and Elliott, struck by another violent coughing spell, staggered blindly out of the door to the fresh night air.

I followed to assist him. . . .

Mr. Wines, on looking over our property, did not share our optimistic approval of the mining proposition—at least, not enough to put up the money with which to go ahead with the work. Consequently the task of returning him to the United States and again seeking a prospect fell to Bill.

He left us two days later to the questionable mercy of an unforgiving cat—a cat meditating revenge on the erstwhile pals who had enticed him into an inglorious state of intoxication, then tossed him unmercifully out of the house as dead, and caused him to bring chagrin to his boastful owner. You may, as Elliott did, deny the possibility of premeditated revenge, and refuse to attribute a cat with reasoning intelligence. I don't know.

I do know that Smoky lured a skunk into the house a few days after Bill left. We awoke that morning to find the two

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WHAT THE CAT BROUGHT IN

of them sitting like old cronies before the fireplace.

We shooed the skunk.

Whatever you may do, never shoo a skunk. The skunk left, but he also left a remembrance that lingered.

Next night the skunk, or perhaps it was another, followed Smoky into the room where we slept. We did not shoo him—but I should like to meet the man who started the story that skunks may be handled safely after being doused with a pail of cold water.

The three weeks that followed were a revelation in skunk lore. Now I can tell you the firing range of the average grown skunk, the best positions for close and long range maneuvers, and the respective velocities of the broad- and narrow-striped varieties. I gained my knowledge from bitter first-hand experience. All textbooks to the contrary, I declare that the skunk is by virtue of his despicable and insidious method of attack the most dangerous North American animal—excepting the cat. I do not know much about cats; furthermore, I do not want to know anything about cats.

After the second skunk visit we boarded up the open doors and windows, and found that a skunk lately present is fully as discouraging as the skunk in person. Next we found that skunk odor is very persistent. It lingers; it clings; it permeates. We scrubbed with soap and water, sprayed with kerosene and smoked the house by burning green cedar boughs, before we gave up and moved out in the yard.

Elliott says we left the mine because of the fall in the price of silver and an impending revolution. Perhaps we did.

We left one morning after an all-night drizzling rain had driven us back into the house to sleep. A fire had been reluctantly coaxed into burning, so that we might cook breakfast; and the smell of fresh coffee being ground was flavored by an occasional draft of skunk-tainted air from the house.

Elliott dipped a bucket into the water barrel to fill the coffee-pot. Then he uttered a low moan.

Fearing I knew not what, I rushed to his side.

He pointed dumbly.

Dead, but no less obnoxious, a skunk was floating dejectedly in the water.

That day we walked forty long and weary miles to town.

Never, I say, never provoke the animosity of a cat.

Thin Ice

*Fishing on Green
Bay in winter.*

By
L. F. GROLL

IT was still and cold. Snow hissed down from a sullen sky in hard, bitter flakes. I shrugged my neck deeper into my sheepskin collar as I cut in the windshield wiper in the cab of the truck. A fine day, I thought to be heading for the pound-net grounds three miles offshore on northern Green Bay! But the fish were on, and prices were up; so we were rolling.

I glanced at my partner as I slowed down for the "crack" or pressure ridge that follows the drop-off or deep water the full length of the bay.

Without a word he opened the door and swung out of the cab to run ahead of the now slowly moving truck to inspect the bridge across the crack. Team-work, I thought to myself as I waited for his highball to cross over: Two men and a truck working as a single unit.

The rough ice of the crack wound away to the north and south as far as I could see in the murk of the falling snow. To cross it the fishermen chisel a cut through the ridge and lay two twelve-inch planks across the open water, spaced the right distance apart to take the running-gear of a truck. It takes nerve to roll a two-ton truck across ten feet of open water.

Out at the bridge my partner's mittened hand went up in an O.K. highball. The engine roared in the cold as I gunned the motor to take the bridge on the jump—fairly fast, so that in event of the bridge shifting, momentum would carry us over far enough for me to jump clear.

With a rasp of steel chains on wood the truck took the bridge. My partner swung aboard with a worried frown and buttoned the side curtain as I headed her south through the storm. Behind us in the truck empty fish-boxes bumped and jostled, waiting to be filled with fish at the pound nets.

We had taken a day off and given the truck a good looking-over; and now by the sound of the motor our efforts seemed to have been justified. My partner cocked an eye in my direction and remarked:



"She's cutting them off pretty today." But I didn't answer, for under the front wheels I felt the unmistakable hollow crunch of thin breaking ice. The radiator was sinking before my eyes as I shouted, "Jump clear!" and reached for the fasteners on the curtains on my side.

The truck stopped with a sickening crunch, slued sideways and plunged to the bottom. My partner's startled cry echoed in my ears as tons of water-pressure slammed the door shut, cutting off escape. With a dull thump we struck bottom.

The truck lay on its right side, the only open door pinned shut. Now, basically I often think that I'm a coward. If I go to a dentist, my knees knock together. But in a case of this kind I react differently.

Now as the truck came to rest on the bottom, time slowed up, while my mind accelerated. On the way down, I had thought of my wife and kids and tripping right behind that came the thought: "You'll never get that door open until all the air is out of the cab and the water-pressure is equalized."

My partner tore with his nails at the tough fabric of the top, but his body was twisted and rolled by the water and air-pressure like a cat in a bag. All this took place in the matter of seconds. Putting all my strength into it, and using my grip on the wheel as a purchase, I shoved with both feet against the door. For the space of a heartbeat it held; and then with a roar of the last escaping air, it burst open. With my lower body half out of the cab, I twisted and groped until I felt an arm still weakly moving. With a tug and heave I hauled my partner across the wheel and out of the open door.

With my lungs bursting, and black spots dancing before my eyes, I swam upward. Somehow my partner was ahead of me, a black figure like a picture in slow motion swimming upward through the cold green water. Above him like a

partly inflated balloon a great bubble of escaping air was shaking slowly toward the surface of the hole. With a bump my head struck something solid.

"*I'm under the ice!*" The thought flashed into my mind only to be followed by the correct answer. The fish-boxes on the truck had floated clear, and I was under them. With my last reserve of air I dived, and the next second my head and shoulders plunged up and out into the snow-storm like a sounding whale. I tried to pull my body up onto the ice; but couldn't make it. And then I saw a beautiful sight: On the edge of the ice a little farther down, the printed legend leaped out at me like a neon sign. *Over-size 33x4½*. A tire, rim and all, smashed out of the spokes when the truck had slued into the hole! Following the edge hand over hand, I grabbed that good steel rim. Carefully, hardly daring to breathe for fear that the tire too would slide into the open hole, I pulled myself up onto the ice, and lay panting in the snow. All this time I had been aware of my partner's hoarse shouts through the storm:

"Help me! Help me for God's sake! The current is pulling me under." With dismay I turned, to see that he had come up on the opposite side of the hole from me; and the current, which was running strong from the south, was slowly pulling him under the ice. Lying down on my belly, I seized a floating fish-box and shoved it toward him.

"Grab that box!" I yelled.

His eyes were glassy and his breath whistled through his teeth, but at last in desperation he released his grip on the ice and seized the box. Carefully I drew him toward me until I could bury my fingers in his hair. With a last heave he came up onto the ice, box and all.

Twenty minutes later we stumbled into a gill-net crew lifting gill nets in a canvas-covered shanty. They took off their sheepskin coats and gave them to us to wear and took us ashore as fast as their car would travel.

After a good warm dinner and dry clothes, I reported to the fish-house to find my partner there talking it over.

"The way fish prices are," I offered, "we could hook the trailer behind the sedan and lift that south net this afternoon."

"It's O.K. with me," he answered, as he pulled on his mittens. "But if it's all the same to you, I'll ride the trailer."

Three hours after sinking the truck, we were rolling. Prices were up.



Riders for Russia

A cavalry action of 1914.

By **BORIS PAVLOFF**

CAME the summer of 1914. On July 30th general mobilization was ordered. A few hours after the orders were received, the echelons of hussars at close intervals were on their way. We reached our destination, a small Polish town some sixty miles east of Warsaw, the day war was declared.

One morning a few days later Rotmeister Mahoff organized three patrols from his own squadron, which he sent out to reconnoiter in as many different directions, each patrol to keep within ready access of his headquarters. Each patrol consisted of seven men and one officer. I was in charge of one of these patrols. I sent Corporal Likoff and one soldier ahead as scouts.

We were approaching a hill, on the crest of which appeared a village, when Corporal Likoff came galloping down the road toward me.

"I saw eight Germans on the main road in the village—near the church," he shouted.

"Draw sabers and follow me," I commanded instantly, spurring my mount to a gallop across the back yards, away from the road. In this way I expected to come upon the enemy by surprise. Soon we were in the heart of the village and nearing the church. We could now plainly see the German cavalymen standing there. The Germans also saw us and started off at a sharp gallop.

"Cut to the right through the yards and scatter," I ordered. My mount seemed inspired and ran like the wind. In a few seconds we were on the opposite slope of the hill. About three hundred yards to our left was the main road whose course lay over the hill. Over its

crest, one by one, the eight fleeing Germans flashed into view.

"Fire right from your saddles," I ordered, shooting with my revolver as I galloped. My hussars unslung their rifles, and shot after shot rang out.

We continued down the soft slope, intending to cut off the Germans from their right as they fled along the road. But at the foot of the hill they separated into two groups—four continuing on over the main road, the other four taking the road which turned to the right and wound around the hill toward which we were now galloping. It was a very wild ride down that muddy slope. We also divided into two groups—the four of my men nearest the main road continuing on over it in pursuit of the Germans fleeing in that direction; the other three and I turned sharply to the right to cut off the Germans who took the road around the hill.

"I will catch them alive," yelled Ossipoff, frothing at the mouth, and wild-eyed like an animal.

Suddenly the Germans came to an abrupt stop, quickly dismounted and pulled their horses to the ground for use as barricades. They were now only four hundred to five hundred feet off. To continue the charge, was hopeless. So at the same instant that the Germans were dismounting, I yelled at the top of my lungs: "Dismount and lie down on the ground. Dar, take the horses."

I practically fell from my horse, flattened myself on the ground and grabbed Dar's gun. Beside me lay Ossipoff and my favorite Corporal Likoff. Meanwhile Dar had taken the horses into the cover of a hollow in the hillside some twenty paces behind us. Once more we held the advantage, for the Germans' prone horses did not hide them from our somewhat elevated position.

The exchange of fire was very hot, and soon one German lying on the ground suddenly dropped his rifle, released his hold on his horse's bridle and rolled

over. His horse leaped to its feet and scampered off riderless. We increased our fire. Two of the Germans seized their wounded comrade, put him on one of the horses and galloped off at top speed. The fourth remained behind to fight it out alone. Courageously he fired and reloaded as rapidly as he could—until finally one of our bullets laid him low.

In his pockets we found a notebook, his identification card, and a postcard filled up with writing and ready to be mailed. He was a Corporal in a Jaeger regiment. My men wanted to know what was written on the postcard, so I undertook to translate it for them. It was written to his fiancé in a cheerful tenor, telling her not to worry about him, and that he expected to see her and marry her, "as soon as we finish with these Russian swine, which won't be long now."

The ugly side of war, hitherto veiled in the glamour of daring and heroic deeds, was now forced upon me, and started a new train of thoughts through my mind. I could not drive away the hideous picture of the dead German, with blood oozing from his mouth.

TWO days later our squadron was ordered forward at a fast pace, starting south of Radom and proceeding toward Krakoff. We passed the night at a small village. Next morning a hatless hussar rushed up to our headquarters by the roadside.

"The enemy, the enemy!" he shouted, pointing up the road in the direction from which he had come. "There are fifty or sixty of them, and two big wagons."

The squadron was ordered in the saddle at once and forward. Rotmeister Mahoff grasped the situation immediately. "Kornet Pavloff, you take half the squadron and charge them," he ordered.

"First half squadron," I commanded, "sabers out. Lances ready. Charge!"

We galloped forward, spread out on either side of the road. Soon we saw enemy soldiers grouped around a wagon about a mile ahead, and opened fire. The bullets hummed around us.

"Hurrah!" I shouted as we raced on. My men yelled wildly, the hills echoing the shouts. I gripped my Persian saber harder as we came closer to the foe.

To the left I saw Krougloff gradually encircling the enemy wagon. Almost at the same instant a strapping big German appeared at my left side, his long

straight weapon poised for a slash at me. I leaned forward close to my horse's neck and reached far out with my saber to ward off the blow. There was a sharp clang as steel met steel. Then quickly swinging my saber in a complete circle, I struck for the German's neck. My saber first struck something hard, and then I felt it cut into soft flesh. The luckless German toppled to the ground.

Cries went up from one of their wagons as the Germans realized they were almost surrounded. The driver of one of the wagons lashed his horses furiously to rush it out of the encircling movement. Meanwhile, however, a machine-gun on the fleeing wagon was firing at us.

"I will cut down that fellow who is peppering us!" I resolved in my own mind. Then I remembered nothing more.

When some time later I opened my eyes I found myself on a comfortable bed between clean white sheets. Near me in another bed lay Corporal Likoff.

"Thank God, you are again conscious," exclaimed the Corporal.

"Please explain all this to me, Likoff. I can't seem to remember anything."

"Well we were both wounded by that damn' German machine-gun, and here we are in a hospital," he replied.

Later I was in the hospital of the Princess Orloff at Tsarsko-Selo; and one day Colonel Velichkovsky called me on the phone.

"Listen to what I am about to read to you," came his voice over the telephone. ("What have I done?" I thought, and braced myself for unpleasant news.)

"The Order to the Ninth Army, by its Commander, General Lechitzky. By approval of the local committee of the Saint George members of the Army, for courageous action against the enemy while with the reconnaissance squadron and charging a detachment of the enemy and turning it back, the Saint George cross is awarded to Boris Pavloff, kornet of the Regiment of Hussars.' Congratulations to you, Pavloff."

That same night Colonel Velichkovsky notified the hospital that the Empress herself expressed the desire to confer the award upon me. So two days later I was required to appear at the Tsarskoe Selsky Hospital, where the Czarina and the Grand Duchesses served as nurses. There the Czarina presented me with the black leather box containing the white enamel cross of Saint George and the symbolic black and yellow sword-knot so dear to the heart of every Russian officer.

The Leopard Woman

THE African continent provides an extraordinary mélange of color, but in no part are the contrasts so great as in Abyssinia. Geographically, the country reveals Nature in her most gigantic and grotesque form.

Seen from an airplane, the country rises like a secret haunt of eagles or a desert den of hyenas. No battlefield could have been better devised to reveal the ineptitude of modern mechanized armies.

Men who enter this country must be prepared for every form of fever and dysentery. Mosquitoes whine in a continual blood-lust. Scorpions and tarantulas wriggle in the sands. And for the most part, the Abyssinians are infected with all types of dreaded diseases.

Hungry crocodiles snout the rivers. Packs of hunting lions, with their attendant jackals or hyenas, are always on the prowl. Eagles and vultures will follow caravans for days in the hope of carrion. White and red ants devour a camp within a day, and the traveler is continually brought to a halt by those seas of thorn scrub that surge toward him and can lacerate the hides of horses.

A nightmare terrain indeed is this!

The Italians may introduce poison gas into their war over Ethiopia. But the Abyssinians themselves possess powerful poisons, more agonizing and certain in their effect. From the cactus and other plants the tribesmen brew poisons with which they can infect water-holes, and for that matter the food-supplies of advancing armies. A black chemist in Addis Ababa gave me a list of those deadly bush poisons. There is, for example, *N'gabrobwe*, which is a powder ground from the dried root of a bush of the same name. If mixed with tobacco, it kills the smoker at the second or third puff. Bulbs known as *mukomba* and *chiwezeze*, and the fruits *mulimbulla* and *musalla*, provide juices which mixed with beer or meat stews are equally certain in their fatal results.

The most terrible poison of all is obtained from the milky juice of the candelabra cactus tree. This juice the natives pour into pools, and within half an hour every fish comes gasping to the surface. Extraordinarily enough, the na-

tives eat these fish, and are apparently immune to the poison. But the pool into which the poison has been poured, remains deadly, even for washing therein.

A cruel, pitiless country. And a cruel, pitiless people inhabiting it. . . .

Even the Emperor of Abyssinia himself is uncertain of the number of souls beneath his sway. Various estimates of the population range from eight to fifteen millions. It is safe to assume that it is about ten millions. It is possible, even today, to journey into the heart of Abyssinia and discover some barbaric race unknown to the modern ethnologist. For example, living in caves in the inaccessible mountains of Semyen, north of Lake Tsana, is that queer race known as the "Hyena Men." They appear to have allied themselves with that other famous African secret society, the "Leopard Men," and in a similar fashion practise the black art of lycanthropy. Neighboring tribes believe that these men, in the form of hyenas, ravage their villages by night and carry off women.

AND that the belief in lycanthropy, or a human changing into beast, still exists in Abyssinia was revealed to me one night in Addis Ababa itself: I was invited to the house of a Greek merchant to witness the transformation of a Galla woman into a leopard.

Two Armenians, our host, and a number of Abyssinian chiefs constituted the audience. There was an orchestra of four drums and one long bamboo trumpet. Galla men thumped the drums with their black fists, while strange howls came from the man blowing the trumpet. There was also a fine bearded savage for the master of the ceremonies. He led the Galla woman forward with all the air of an impresario.

The Galla woman was completely naked except for a leopard skin wound about her waist. She was one of the most beautiful women I have seen in Africa. Her skin possessed a sheen not often found among the black races. But her most startling feature was her eyes: they were oblique and flecked with yellow. In the lamplight of that little room they gleamed strangely.

By WILLIAM MAKIN

*A weird experience
in Addis Ababa.*

The woman, with the leopard skin at her waist, stood on a miserable strip of dirty carpet at one end of the room. She seemed quite unconscious of the squatting group of men. As the orchestra redoubled its fierce cacophony, she suddenly became rigid. The whole of her body seemed to become as hard as ebony. The oblique eyes took on a strange glitter.

THE bearded savage gazed intently at her. He may have hypnotized the woman. To the banging of the drums, she swayed stiffly, like a tree bending in the wind. The mouth seemed to widen. The teeth were bared. The whole face took on the cruel appearance of a leopard.

So far, this voodoo was only a demonstration of catalepsy that is easily induced by Africans. I had seen nothing unusual. But when the little orchestra changed its rhythm, the woman of ebony changed into a shivering, trembling piece of black flesh. One could see the shivers rippling through her body. For a moment the eyes closed, and saliva began to drip from her mouth.

The atmosphere of the room had become stifling. Cigarette- and pipe-smoke circled over our heads, and the din of the drums within the whitewashed walls hammered on the senses until they reeled. I was conscious that something was about to happen, and fought desperately against the drugging of the mind by noise and smoke.

The Galla woman tumbled trembling to the floor. She postured on hands and feet. For one moment her oblique eyes opened, and I saw the yellow flecks staring madly at nothing. And at the same time, from somewhere in the depths of her black being, there came forth a strange cry that chilled the blood, the cry of a leopard. I felt the Armenians at my side start with terror.

It was then that with a shriek, the bearded savage flung a gaudy blanket over the woman on all-fours. He began to gabble excitedly. The orchestra redoubled its efforts, and sweat poured from the drummers as they pounded on the skins. Once again the cry of a leopard,



ard, muffled this time, came from beneath the blanket.

Suddenly the din ceased. The silence that descended upon the room shocked the senses completely. It was more terrifying than the hammering of the drums or the howling of the bamboo trumpet. That tense silence lasted possibly two minutes, though it seemed an hour. All our eyes were fixed on the gaudy blanket on the floor beneath which something squirmed and spat.

At last the bearded savage approached the blanket. In his hands were a steel collar and chain. Boldly he plunged his hands beneath the blanket. There was a moment's struggle, and then the covering was tossed aside. He stood erect, and his hands gripped the steel chain tightly. At the end of it was a beautiful black leopard, tugging madly and snarling at the little group of men, who scrambled hastily to their feet. And the eyes—the oblique eyes of the leopard—were flecked with gold.

A clever conjuring trick? Perhaps!

The bearded savage refused to transform the leopard back into a woman. He said he was too exhausted, and that such a transformation comes only in the long hours of sleep. A subtle and cautious evasion! At the same time he accepted the gift of money from myself, the Greek and others in the audience, with the air of condescension.

As I left, I thanked the Greek for a strange entertainment, which still haunted my mind as I sat in my little room at the hotel.... I have described what I saw.

IF a leopard was substituted for a woman beneath the blanket, in the manner of some broadcloth-clad illusionist of the music-hall, it was done with an astonishing cleverness, under the noses of an audience, and within the confines of four walls where any entrance or exit would have been remarked.

That transformation of a woman into a leopard was one of my strangest experiences in Abyssinia.

Fighting John

(Continued from page 13)

appeared several times during the day but did not molest us. We camped for the night, and were joined by the paymaster and six marines with supplies.

In the trek toward Tientsin we leapfrogged all the foreign units; we had led the advance and were now to lead the retreat. And the farther we went, the tougher it got. We took an eastbound train out of Lang Fang on the morning of the seventeenth, and it was evening before we had covered the twenty miles to the Ho River. We were followed shortly by all of the allies we had left in Lang Fang. They had been attacked so heavily that a German contingent had been compelled to fall back on Lang Fang, and the combined forces there were not sufficient to hold the town against overwhelming numbers.

AT the Ho River we learned the Imperial Army had joined the Boxers on the seventeenth and had put the important railroad bridge over the river out of commission. Our railroad equipment was of no further use to us, and all units began to concentrate at the bridgehead to continue the retreat to Tientsin on foot. Vital parts of the locomotives were removed and thrown into the river. The enemy appeared in the distance in all directions, but kept out of the range of our guns.

On the eighteenth I was placed in charge of an outpost at the damaged bridge, and in a short time was joined by a number of Germans. They had orders to capture junks to carry our wounded and baggage down the river. When the Germans moved across the bridge, the Chinese opened fire on them. We returned this fire, and the enemy withdrew with some loss. The Germans brought back four junks. In the meantime the Chinese army and Boxers attacked the detachments in our rear, forcing them to fall back on the main body. The losses of the British, Russians and Germans were fifty wounded and seven killed. This fighting was with an advance guard of the Chinese Imperial Army and the Boxers, numbering forty thousand all told, and led by a Chinese prince.

The entire expedition crossed the Ho River, starting at sunup on the nineteenth. Our wounded and baggage were loaded on junks, which were pulled with ropes by men walking along the tow-path, and the force started down the river toward Tientsin, not more than twenty miles away. The enemy menaced us all day, but they had not recovered sufficiently from the sting of battle on the previous day to start another attack. While the story of the day is brief, the work was hard, hot and long.

When Captain McCalla had us fall in on the twentieth, he made a short address. "Men," he said, "you have the post of honor in this column; you are the advance guard. Remember that noise does not win battles. Be sure you have an enemy on your line of sight before you fire. Aim between the knee and the hip. Remember your ship! Remember your country! Squads right, march."

A mile farther on we found the enemy in line of skirmishers from the river to as far as one could see to our left. This was the advance guard of ten thousand soldiers sent from Tientsin to hold us up until the Imperial Prince's army could move on our position. As soon as we came into their view, the fight opened. Admiral Seymour sent word for us to fall back on the main body, but Captain McCalla decided his position was better than any to the rear. He continued the engagement, sending the second company under cover of the river levee to attack the flank of the enemy. That maneuver forced the enemy's advanced lines to fall back on their main body. Admiral Seymour then ordered British reinforcements to our position; but by the time they arrived, the enemy was in retreat.

WE resumed the march, arriving at a place where the road ran to the left of a village that was on the river-bank, to the right of another village about a quarter mile farther. Directly ahead about a mile was a walled town. To our immediate right and left was open country. It looked like a nice place for a trap. McCalla halted and deployed his men on both sides of the road and sent word back to Seymour to advance about five

By LOWELL THOMAS
and JOHN McCLOY

hundred men from the main body to take positions on our flanks. Seymour asked McCalla why he'd stopped, saying everything looked peaceful. McCalla replied: "That's just it; it's *too* peaceful."

THE French on the extreme right were to go to the right of the village along the river-bank. The Germans, on the left of the French and on our right, were to take the village. British sailors and marines were to advance with us and take the village on the left. The Americans were to advance along the road in the open. It took some time to get the various troops into position. When all was ready and we were about to march, the enemy got tired of waiting for us to walk into his trap, and marched out to meet us with flags flying and bands playing. It looked more as if he were going to parade than to do battle. The front ranks began firing on us, and their artillery opened up from several points about the same time. It only took a few minutes to blast them off the field and force them to take cover.

The Americans pushed through to the walled town; the British and Germans were held up in their respective villages; the French were nailed to their position by the enemy on their front and from across the river; we were halted in front of the fortified town. The Germans were the first to get through and reinforce us. We held our ground until the British cleared out their opposition, then started to advance once more. The British took the fortified town, and we passed it to the right.

We seemed to have pushed through the Chinese army and away from contact with our column, so we halted in some brush. In front was an open field, and on our right front was a village. We were not sure of the positions of either our friends or the enemy. McCalla ordered Courtney to march a dozen of us out into the open field, stand at attention and not return any fire that we drew. Courtney asked me what he had done to be placed before a firing-squad in my company. I kidded him by replying that McCalla wanted to have a monument built in China, and this was a place from

which it could be seen for a long distance. We were not standing very long before the enemy resented our presence by opening fire on us, first with rifles, then with artillery. McCalla kept us there until he was certain that it was the enemy who was doing the shooting. We were then ordered to take cover, and our whole force moved over toward the village, where we were held by the enemy fire.

In a short time we were joined by the Japanese. Our two companies were moved to the right and left, and the Japanese took a position in between. Our first company moved over to the left and some Germans took a position on the left of the Japanese. The enemy seemed to have two small field-guns, and from the rifle fire, it was hard to estimate their number. The whine of rifle bullets finally stopped, but the noise of firing continued, and we thought the enemy was paying all his respects to those on our left. Those on the left thought that the right of the line was on the receiving end.

The main body of the column was coming rapidly, so an assault was ordered on the village. The party I was with charged into the right of the village and saw about twenty Chinese soldiers dragging two small field-guns in the distance. The streets of the town were festooned with strings of exploding fire-crackers, which we had mistaken for rifle-fire. The column moved on the plain to the right of the village and close to the river, the position placing us in the center of three villages. When night fell, the three villages were set on fire to light up the surrounding country and prevent the enemy from making a surprise attack.

ONE of our men had captured a duck the previous day. As we were near the river, he kept the duck alive. This day he could not keep it alive, so he killed it and slung it to his belt. Our travel through sand, mud, water and brush wore the feathers off in spots, but when we pitched camp, it was decided to cook it. The owner cleaned it, and some others dug up half-grown vegetables from

FIGHTING JOHN

gardens. We found a hog-scalding pot to make the stew in. Nearly everyone contributed some food, and the pot was filled. The aroma was delicious and we licked our "chops" in anticipation of a filling supper. The enemy was sprinkling us with his rifle and artillery fire, but no one was paying much attention to it; the "mulligan" was the thing of importance. But as Cook shouted, "Come and get it," a shell dropped into the center of the pot, scattering duck all over the country. We fell asleep with bitter thoughts of the enemy.

ON June 21 the enemy brought more and larger artillery into play; their infantry was more numerous and more determined, and our advance was contested at every turn in the road. The villages were fortified; and the enemy, in most cases, held his ground until the last. A part of the column would occupy a position and cover the advance of another part. It was a case of flanking the enemy positions, driving a hole in his front, then widen it to get through. Every part of the column, front, flanks and rear, was engaged.

In the afternoon we reached open country, and soon there appeared a large force of cavalry, estimated at about three thousand. Some one shouted, "The Cossacks!" I did not know why we should expect Cossacks. However, we stopped firing and cheered them. They looked magnificent, coming at full gallop, the ground trembling under the pounding hoofs. When they were half a mile away, they began yelling, and very much to our surprise, they began shooting also. If they had not been so eager, they might have caught us offguard and caused us heavy casualties. We opened up on them with everything we had, ripping large holes in their ranks. After terrific losses they melted out of the picture in about ten minutes, without doing any damage to our side. The field was covered with hundreds of dead and wounded men and horses. We then turned our attention to the infantry.

Seamen McKelvey, Foley and I started to bring ammunition to the firing-line. We put a box holding a thousand rounds of rifle cartridges, and one containing about eight three-inch shells for the field-gun

on the back of a jackass, and started for the front. Everything was going smoothly until we got within about one hundred yards of the firing line at a place where we had to cross the levee of the river. The ass stopped, and no kind of persuasion would make him go farther. While the argument was at its height, several bullets from the enemy cut short the career of the critter, and so we were compelled to lug the ammunition to the front.

Joe Clancy was a man who weighed about one hundred thirty-five pounds, and his freckled face with its sharp features was topped by a head of bright red hair. He and I were trying to make ourselves as small as possible behind a Chinese grave. There was a tremendous fire coming from the enemy, and our cover was being rapidly whittled away by bullets. I turned to Joe with the intention of asking him how long a time he thought the enemy would take to move the dirt that was in front of us at the rate it was being cut down; but when I looked at him, I exclaimed: "Gosh, Joe, you're *handsome*!" His eyes and face were lit up with the excitement and joy of battle.

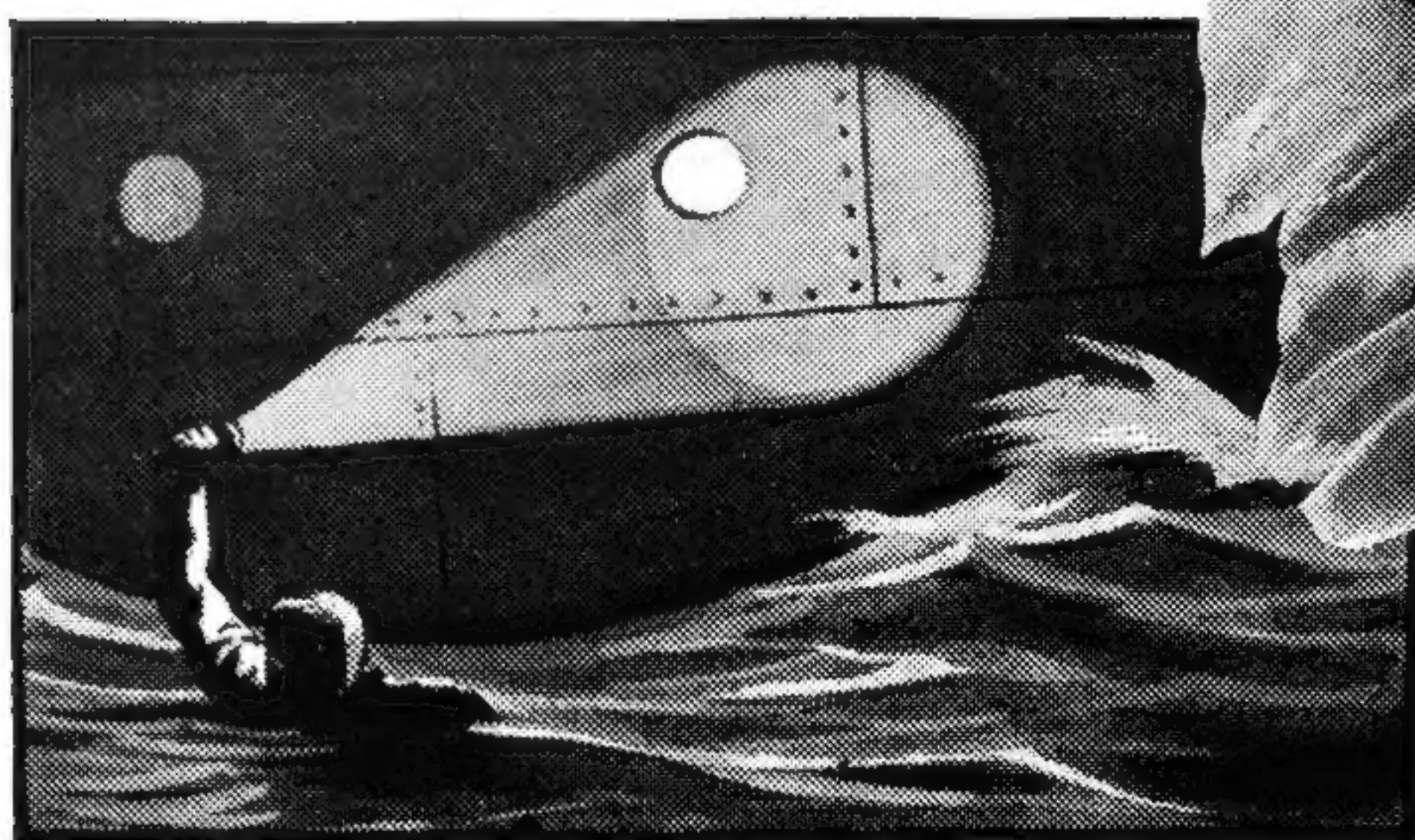
The First Sergeant of the second company had been wounded, and its commander called me up and said Captain McCalla had promoted me to take his place. If I was a disreputable-looking sailor when I reported for duty on June 6, on the day of my promotion—the 21st—it would be hard to say that I looked like any kind of a sailor. My uniform was torn; there were holes in both upper and lower parts of my shoes, and I was spattered with mud. But they seemed to think that I could lead fighting men when the going was rough; officers were no longer concerned about a man being in the uniform of the day.

That promotion on the field was the greatest honor I have ever received. For there were brave men there who had seen longer service and held higher ratings on the books, and they were also regular members of the landing force, while I was an outsider from the start. One thing the promotion did was to stop my free-lancing by giving me a definite duty. Previously, I had belonged to no one in particular and was used by everyone.

This extraordinary saga of battle and danger on land and sea comes to even more exciting episodes in our forthcoming July issue.

30 Minutes with Davy Jones...and Back to Life Again

Swept Overboard in Midnight Monsoon, Frank Dryden Cheats the Sea



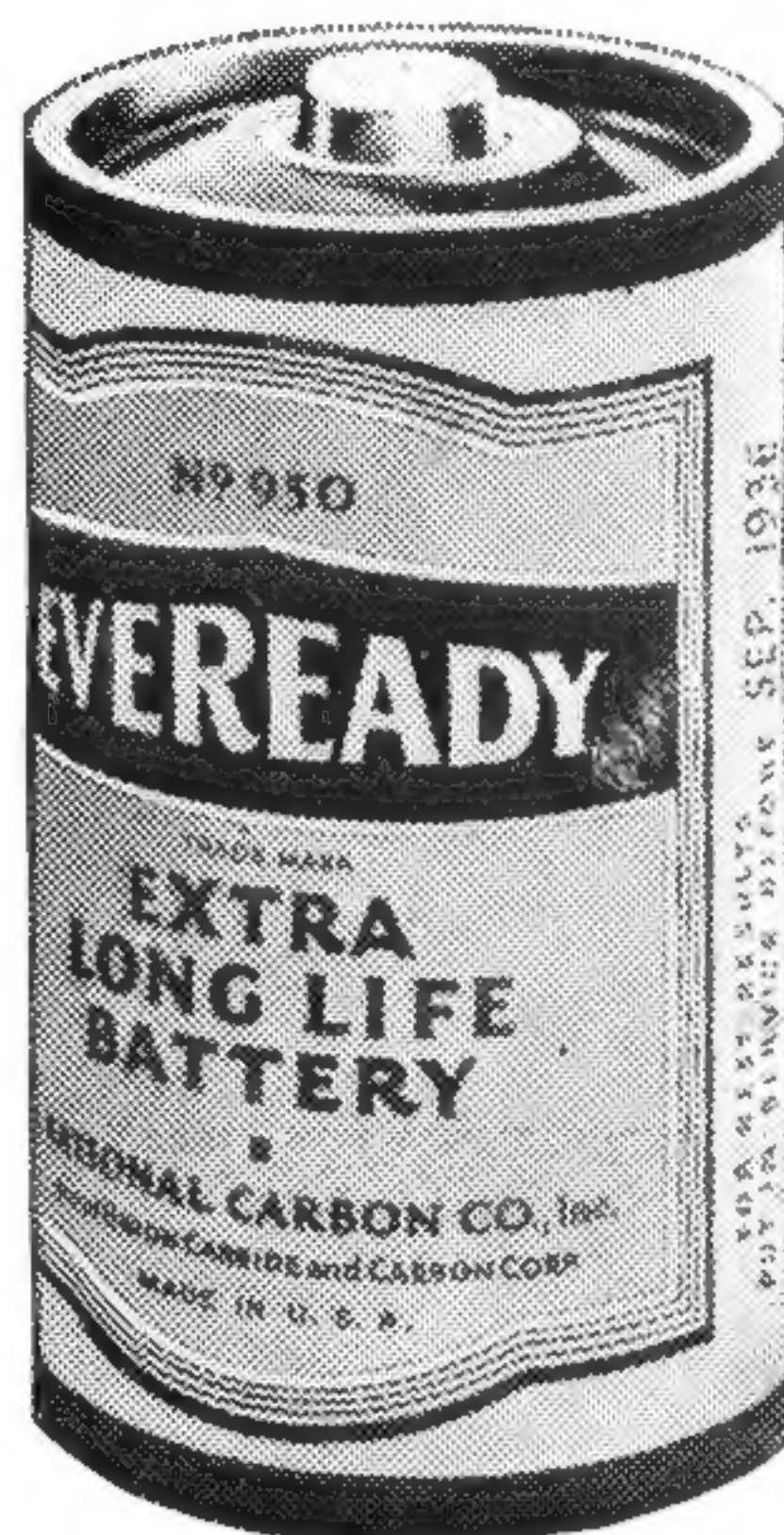
Frank Dryden, who battled Death, and WON!



"It's almost midnight," writes Frank Dryden. "A terrific wave comes over and sweeps me with it over the side. I freeze to the flashlight I'm holding, but I'm dressed for heavy weather. Oil-skins and sea-boots are pulling me under. To get out of them I have to hold the light under water. If it goes out, so will I. But I have to take that chance . . . Then the whistle blows . . . They can see my light!"

"For 30 minutes I fight to stay afloat . . . Every minute I expect my light to go out . . . a shark to devour me. Then the ship manoeuvres alongside. It's too rough to launch a boat . . . they throw me a line . . . somehow I get it around me. Once on deck I check out, and my shipmates tell me they have to pry that flashlight out of my fingers . . . And, by the way, it was still burning. After months of daily shipboard use, those Eveready batteries had the

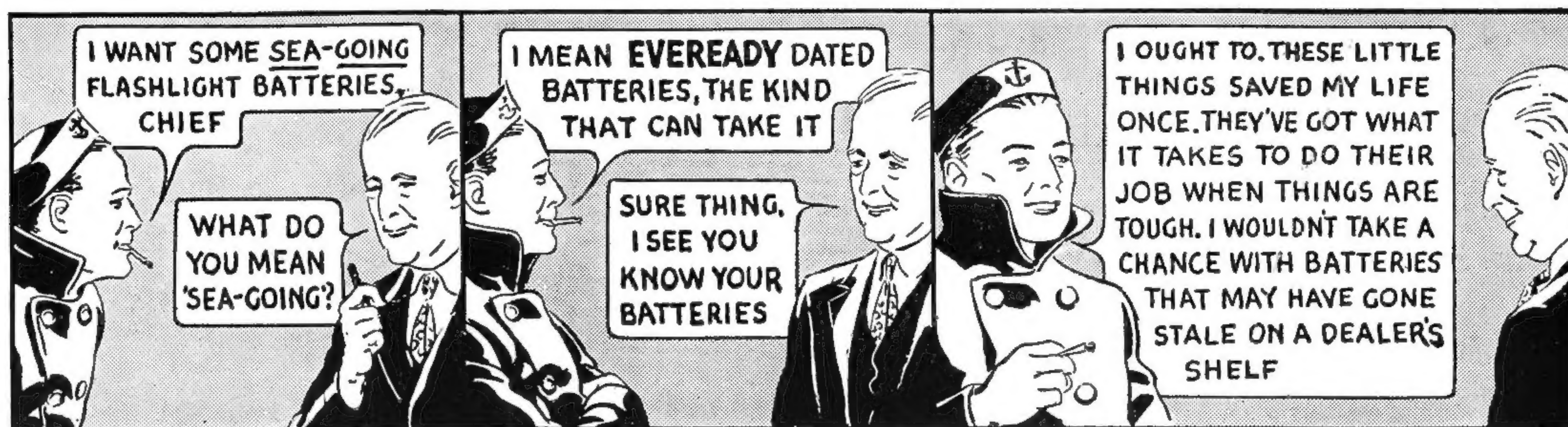
strength to see me through. Because they were fresh when the mate bought them, I am able to give you my story today."



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30 East 42nd Street
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**EVEREADY
BATTERIES**
← **ARE FRESH
BATTERIES**

Once more the DATE-LINE is a LIFE-LINE



FOR DIGESTION'S SAKE—SMOKE CAMELS



A RARE PLEASURE. Leisurely diners at Jacques French Restaurant (*above*) enjoy such dishes as Baked Oysters *à la Jacques*. Camels add the final

touch to dining. "Camels are most popular here," Jacques himself observes. "They are clearly the favorite with those who know fine living."

**Smoking Camels a Pleasant Way
to Ward Off Effects of
Worry and Strain on Digestion.
Camels Set You Right!**

Modern days are tense. Nerves get "wound up." Hurry, worry, and strain slow up the normal processes of digestion.

Smoking Camels restores the flow of fluids so necessary to good digestion. You sense a

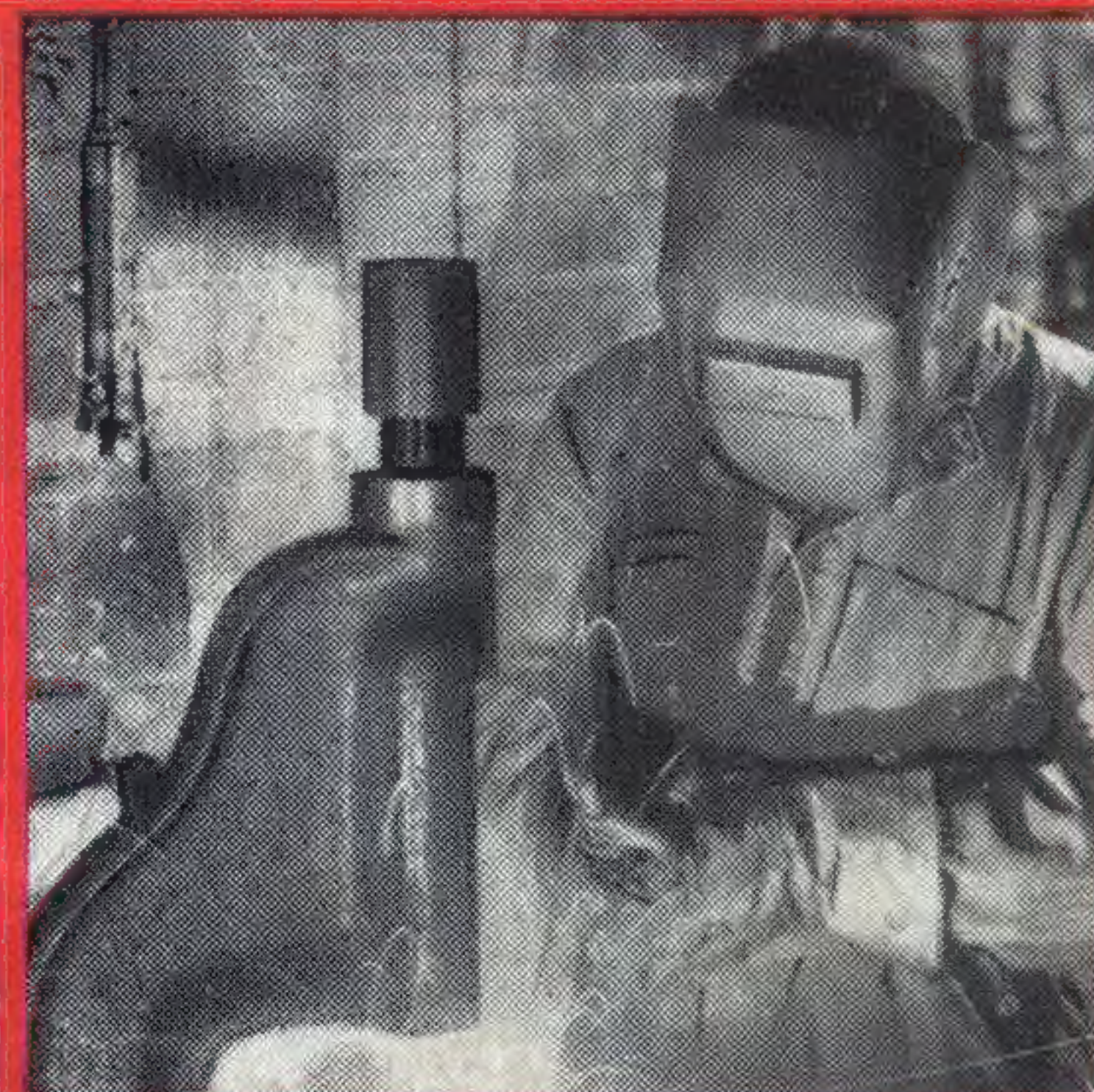
comforting "lift" and feeling of well-being.

And you can smoke Camels steadily. The matchless blend of Camel's costlier tobaccos never gets on your nerves or tires your taste.



THE FLARE of the welding arc climbs to a temperature of 8700° Fahrenheit! Dan Rafferty, master welder, says: "Smoking Camels during and after meals helps my digestion. Camels taste mild and rich."

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